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To
My Parents.



“The South Pole for us all!”—Frontispiece, Page 58.

The Great White Way

A Record of an Unusual Voyage of Discovery, and some
Romantic Love Affairs amid Strange Surroundings.
The Whole Recounted by one Nicholas Chase,
Promoter of the Expedition, whose
Reports have been Arranged
for Publication by

ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE

Author of "The Van Dwellers," "The Bread Line," etc.

WITH DRAWINGS BY BERNARD J. ROSENMEYER,
SKETCHES BY CHAUNCEY GALE, AND MAPS,
ETC. FROM MR. CHASE'S NOTE BOOK



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ
OF
THE GREAT WHITE WAY.

NICHOLAS CHASE, a young man with a dream of discovery, and an inherited love of the sea.

CHAUNCEY GALE, a merry millionaire, with a willingness to back his judgment.

EDITH GALE, his daughter, a girl with accomplishments and ideas.

ZAR, colored maid and former nurse of Edith Gale. A woman with no "fool notions" about the South Pole.

FERRATONI, an Italian electrician with wireless communication, and subtle psychic theories.

CAPTAIN JOSEPH BIFFER, Master of the *Billowcrest*. An old salt, with little respect for wild expeditions.

TERENCE LARKINS, First Officer of the *Billowcrest*, with a disregard of facts.

MR. EMORY, Second Officer of the *Billowcrest*.

WILLIAM STURRITT, Steward of the *Billowcrest*, and inventor of condensed food tablets.

FRENCHY, a bosen who stirs up trouble.

PRINCE OF THE PURPLE FIELDS, a gentle despot of the *Port of Dreams*.

PRINCESS OF THE LILIED HILLS, *His Serene Sister*, whose domain is the deepest South.

Three maidens of the *Land of Dreams and Lotus*.

A shipwrecked sailor, whose rescue is important to all concerned.

Cabin boy, stewardess, and crew of the *Billowcrest*.

Courtiers, populace, etc., of the *Land of the Sloping Sun*.

THE GREAT WHITE WAY.

I.

ANSWER TO AN OLD SUMMONS.

For more than ten generations my maternal ancestors have been farers of the sea, and I was born within call of high tide. At the distance of a thousand miles inland it still called me, and often in childhood I woke at night from dreams of a blue harbor with white sails.

It is not strange, therefore, that I should return to the coast. When, at the age of thirty, I found myself happily rid of a commercial venture—conducted for ten years half-heartedly and with insignificant results—it was only natural that I should set my face seaward. My custom, of which there was never any great amount, and my goodwill, of which there was ever an abundance, I had disposed of to one who was likely to reverse these conditions—his methods in the matter of trade being rather less eccentric than my own. He had been able to pay me in cash the modest sum agreed upon,

and this amount I now hoped to increase through some marine investment or adventure—something that would bring me at once into active sea life—though I do not now see what this could have been, and I confess that my ideas at the time were somewhat vague.

II.

I RENEW AN OLD DREAM.

PERHAPS first of all I wished to visit the South Pole—not an unreasonable ambition it would seem for one backed by ten generations of sea captains and ocean faring—but one that I found not altogether easy to gratify. For one thing, there was no Antarctic expedition forming at the time; and then, my notions in the matter were not popular.

From boyhood it had been my dream that about the earth's southern axis, shut in by a precipitous wall of ice, there lay a great undiscovered world. Not a bleak desolation of storm-swept peaks and glaciers, but a fair, fruitful land, warmed and nourished from beneath by the great central heat brought nearer to the surface there through terrestrial oblation, or, as my geography had put it, the "flattening of the poles."

I had held to this fancy for a long time on the basis of theory only, and, perhaps, the added premise that nature would not allow so vast a tract as the Antarctic Continent to lie desolate. But, curi-

ously enough, about the time I arrived in New York I met with what seemed to me undoubted bits of evidence in the reports of some recent polar observations.

Borchgrevink, a Norwegian explorer, returning with a poorly fitted Antarctic expedition, reported, among other things, a warm current off Victoria Land, at a point below the 71st parallel, and flowing approximately from the *direction of the pole!* *

Nansen, another Norwegian, in the Arctic Polar Sea, had been astonished to find that the water at a great depth, instead of being colder than at the surface as he had expected, was *warmer!* He had also found that as he progressed northward from 80° the thermometer had been inclined to *rise* rather than to fall. To be sure, when he arrived at a point within a little more than two hundred miles of the earth's axis, he had found only a continuance of ice—a frozen sea which undoubtedly extended to

“* It seems to me,” he says, in an article printed in the Century Magazine (January, 1896), “that an investigation of the origin and consequences of the warm current running northeast, which we experienced in Victoria Bay, is of the greatest importance.”

True, Borchgrevink believed the Antarctic Continent to be an exceptionally cold one, but for this he was not to blame. No man can help what he does or does not believe in these matters regardless of sound logic and able reasoning to the contrary.—N. C.

the pole itself; but this frigidity I attributed to the fact that it *was* a sea into which, from the zone of fierce cold below, were constantly forced huge ice-floes. These, as I conceived, would maintain the condition of cold in the Arctics by shutting out the under warmth, through which, however, they would be gradually melted—to be discharged in those great Arctic currents which Nansen and other explorers had observed. The lack of thickness in the ice *forming* about the pole had also been noted with some surprise. This too, I claimed, was due to the warm earth beneath it which, while it could not much affect the general climate, when some three miles of very chilly water and several feet of substantial ice lay between, did serve as a provision of nature to prevent the northern sea from becoming one mighty solidified mass.

Now, ice-floes could not be forced *inland*, as would have to be the case in the Antarcotics where there was admittedly a continent instead of a sea. Around this continent, it was said, there lay a precipitous frozen wall which no man had ever scaled. What lay beyond, no man of our world had ever seen. But in my fancy I saw those ramparts of eternal ice receding inward to a pleasant land, as the snow-capped Sierras slope to the verdant plains of California. A pleasant land—a fair circular world—temperate in its outer zone, becoming even

tropic at the center, and extending no less than a thousand miles from rim to rim. There, I believed, unknown to the world without, a great and perhaps enlightened race lived and toiled—loved and died.

III.

EVEN SEEKING TO REALIZE IT.

BUT scientists, I was grieved to find, took very little stock in these views. Even such as were willing to listen declared that the earth's oblation counted for nothing. Most of them questioned the existence of a great central heat—some disputed it altogether. The currents and temperatures reported by Nansen, Borchgrevink and others, they ascribed, as nearly as I can remember, to centrifugal deflections, to gravitatory adjustments—to anything, in fact, rather than what seemed to me the simple and obvious causes. As a rule, they ridiculed the idea of a habitable world, or even the possibility of penetrating the continent at all. When I timidly referred to a plan I had partially conceived—something with balloons in it—they despised me so openly that I was grateful not to be dismissed with violence. I cannot forego one brief example.

He was a stout, shiny-coated man, with the round eyes and human expression of a seal. He took me quite seriously, however, which some of them had not. Also himself, and the world in gen-

eral. When I had briefly stated my convictions he put his fingers together in front of his comfortable roundness and regarded me solemnly. Then he said:

"My dear young man, you are pursuing what science terms an *ignis fatuus*, commonly and vulgarly known as a will-o'-the-wisp. You are wasting your time, and I assure you that neither I nor my associates in science could, or would, indorse your sophistries, or even stand idly by and see you induce the unthinking man of means to invest in an undertaking which we, as men of profound research and calm understanding, could not, and therefore would not approve." He cleared his throat with a phocine bark at the end of this period and settled himself for the next. "Men in all ages," he proceeded, "have undertaken, in the cause of science, difficult tasks, and at vast expenditure, when there was a proper scientific basis for the effort."

He paused again. My case was hopeless so far as he was concerned—that was clear. I would close the interview with a bit of pleasantry.

"Ah, yes," I suggested, "such as the 'hunting of the snark,' for instance. Well, perhaps I shall find the snark at the South Pole, when I get there, who knows?"

The human seal lifted one flipper and scratched

his head for a moment gravely. Then he said with great severity:

"Young man, I do not recall the *genus* snark. I do not believe that science recognizes the existence of such a creature. Yet, even so, it is most unlikely that its habitat should be the South Pole."

I retired then, strong in the conclusion that the imagination of the average scientist is a fixed equation, and his humor an unknown quantity. Also that his chief sphere of usefulness lies in being able to establish mathematically a fact already discovered by accident. The accident had not yet occurred, hence the time for the scientist and his arithmetic was not at hand.

I now sought capital without science, but the results though interesting were not gratifying.

A millionaire editor, a very Cræsus of journalism, was my final experience in this field. He didn't have any time to throw away, but I seemed reasonably well-fed, and he saw I was in earnest, so he was willing to listen. He put his feet upon a table near me while he did it. When I got the bald facts out and was getting ready to amplify a little he broke in:

"How long would it take you to go there and get back?" he asked.

"I hardly know—five years, perhaps—possibly longer."

The millionaire editor took his feet down.

“Humph! Hundred thousand dollars for a Sunday beat and five years to get it! No, I don’t think we want any South Poles in this paper——”

“But in the cause of human knowledge and science,” I argued.

“My friend,” he said, “the only human knowledge and science that I am interested in is the knowledge and science of getting out, next Sunday and the Sunday after, a better paper than that lantern-faced pirate down the street yonder. When you’ve found your South Pole and brought back a piece of it, come in, and I’ll pay you more for the first slice than anybody else, no matter what they offer. But you’re too long range for us just at present. Good day!”

IV.

TURNING TO THE SEA, AT LAST, FOR SOLACE.

HAVING thus met only with rebuff and disaster in the places where it seemed to me I had most reason to expect welcome and encouragement, I turned for comfort to those who, like my forbears, went down to the sea in ships. Along South Street, where the sky shows through a tangle of rigging, and long bowsprits threaten to poke out windows across the way, I forgot my defeats and even, for a time, my purpose, as I revelled in my long-delayed heritage of the sea.

It was the ships from distant ports that fascinated me most. My Uncle Nicholas—a sailor who was more than half a poet—had been in the foreign trade. I remembered him dimly as a big brown-faced man who had told me of far lands and shipwrecks, and rocked me to sleep to the words and tune of an old hymn, of which I could still repeat the stanza beginning,

“The storm that wrecks the winter sky.”

His vessel with all on board had disappeared somewhere in the dark waters below Cape

Horn more than twenty years before. I had inherited half of his name and a number of precious trinkets brought home during his early days of seafaring—also, it was supposed, something of his tastes and disposition. In a manner I was his heir, and the tall-masted, black-hulled barks that came in from the Orient—to be pushed as quietly into place at the dock as if they had but just been towed across the East River from Brooklyn—these, it seemed to me, were his ships, hence, *my* ships that were coming in, at last.

I found in them treasures of joy unspeakable. Those from around the Horn seemed to bring me direct messages from the lost sailor. I felt that had he lived he would have believed in my dreams and helped me to make them reality. At times I even went so far as to imagine that his ship had not gone down at all, but had sailed away to some fair harbor of the South, whence he had not cared to return.

It thrilled me even to touch one of those weather-beaten hulls. The humblest and most unwashed seaman wrought a spell upon me as he made a pretense of polishing a bit of brass or of mopping up the afterdeck. He had braved fierce storms. He had spent long nights spinning yarns in the fore-castle. Perhaps he had been wrecked and had drifted for weeks in an open boat. It might be that he had been driven by storms into those gloomy seas

of the South—even to the very edge of my Antarctic world!

When they would let me I went on board, to fall over things and ask questions. My knowledge of shipping was about what could be expected of one whose life had been spent on the prairies of the West, with now and then a fleeting glimpse of a Mississippi River steamer. I suppose they wondered how I could be so interested in a subject, concerning which I displayed such a distressing lack of knowledge. They were willing to enlighten me, however, for considerations of tobacco or money, and daily I made new bosom friends—some of them, I suspect, as unholy a lot of sea-rovers as ever found reward at the end of a yard-arm.

I did not seek technical instruction. What I yearned for was their personal experiences, and these they painted for me in colorings of the sea and sky, and in such measure as the supplies were forthcoming. Almost to a man they readily remembered my Uncle Nicholas, but as they differed widely concerning his stature, complexion and general attributes, I was prone to believe at last that they would have recalled him quite as willingly under any other name; and indeed I found this to be true when I made the experiment, finally, of giving his name as Hopkins, or Pierce, or Samelson, instead of the real one, which had been Lovejoy.

I gathered courage presently to interview the officers, but these I found rather less entertaining, perhaps because they were more truthful. Only one of them recalled my Uncle Nicholas, a kindly first mate, and I suspect that even this effort resulted from a desire to please rather than from any real mental process or strict regard for verities.

I suppose I annoyed them, too, for I threw out a hint now and then which suggested my becoming a part of their ship's company, though in what capacity or for what purpose neither I nor they could possibly imagine. As for my Antarctic scheme, I presently avoided mentioning it, or, at most, referred to it but timidly. Indeed, I demeaned myself so far at times as to recall it in jest as the wild fancy of some mythical third party whose reasoning and mentality were properly matters of ridicule and contempt.

For I had discovered early in the game that the conception of a warm country at the South Pole appealed as little to the seaman as to the scientist. The sailors whom I had subsidized most liberally regarded me with suspicion and unconsciously touched their foreheads at the suggestion, while the kindly first officer, who had been willing to remember my uncle, promptly forgot him again and walked away.

I passed my days at length in wandering rather

silently about the docks and shipping offices, seeking to invest my slender means in some venture or adventure of the sea that would take me into many ports and perhaps yield me a modest income besides. I consulted a clairvoyant among other things, a greasy person on Twenty-third Street, who took me into a dim, dingy room and told me that I was contemplating something-or-other and that somebody-or-other would have something-or-other to do with it. This was good as far as it went. I was, in fact, contemplating most of the time. I was ready for anything—to explore, to filibuster, to seek for hidden treasure—to go anywhere and to do anything that would make me fairly and legitimately a part and parcel with the sea. I read one morning of a daring voyager who in a small boat had set out to sail around the world alone. I would have given all that I possessed to have gone with him, and for a few moments I think I even contemplated a similar undertaking. But as I did not then know a gaff from a flying-jib, and realizing that my voyage would probably be completed with suddenness and violence somewhere in the neighborhood of Sandy Hook, I resisted the impulse. As for my Antarctic dream, its realization seemed even farther away than when as a boy I had first conceived it, some fifteen years before.

V.

I OVERHAUL THE STEAM YACHT, BILLOWCREST.

IT was early spring when I had arrived in New York, and the summer heat had begun to wane when I first set eyes on the Billowcrest, and its owner, Chauncey Gale.

On one of those cool mornings that usually come during the first days of August I was taking a stroll up Riverside Drive. Below me lay the blue Hudson, and at a little dock just beyond Grant's Tomb a vessel was anchored. Looking down on her from above it was evident, even to my unprofessional eye, that she was an unusual craft. Her hull was painted white like that of a pleasure yacht and its model appeared to have been constructed on some such lines. Also, an awning sheltered her decks, suggesting the sumptuous pleasures of the truly rich. But she was much larger than any yacht I had ever seen, and fully bark-rigged—carrying both steam and sail. She was wider, too, in proportion to her length, and her cabins seemed rather curiously disposed. A man laboring up the slope

took occasion to enlighten me. He had just investigated on his own account.

"Great boat, that," he panted. "Cost a million, and belongs to a man named Gale. Made his money in real estate and built her himself, after his own ideas. He wasn't a sailor at all, but he'd planned lots of houses and knew what he wanted, and had the money to pay for it. No other boat like her in the world and not apt to be; but she suits him and she goes all right, and that's all that's necessary, ain't it?"

I said that it was, and I presently went down to look at her. I do not now remember that I was prompted by any other motive than to see, if possible, what a man looked like who could afford to disregard the laws and traditions of ship architecture, and build and own a million dollar steamer after his own model, and for his own pleasure. Also, I had a natural curiosity to learn something of what sort of vessel would result from these conditions.

As I drew nearer I was still further impressed with her remarkable breadth of beam, suggesting comfort rather than speed, and by the unusual flare and flatness of her hull, reminding me of the model of Western steamers built for log jams and shallow water. Connecting with the dock was a small gangway, at the top of which stood a foreign-look-

ing sailor in uniform. Across his cap, in white letters, was the word, "BILLOWCREST." He regarded me distrustfully as I walked up and down, and one or two suggestions I made, with a view of conveying to him my good opinion of his boat, as well as the impression that I knew a lot about yachts in general, he acknowledged grudgingly and in mixed tongues. I disapproved of him from the start, and as later events showed, with sufficient reason. Having looked over the vessel casually I halted at last in front of the gangway.

"I should like to come on board," I said.

The polyglot dissented.

"No admit. Mis'r Gale command."

"Is Mr. Gale himself on board?"

I assumed a manner of severity with a view of convincing him that I was of some importance, and at the same instant ascended the gang-plank, extending my card before me. Of course the card meant nothing to him except that I was able to have a card, but I could see that he hesitated and was lost. Evidently he had little knowledge of the great American game when I could intimidate him with one card.

He returned presently, and scowlingly led me into a little saloon forward. Then he disappeared again and I was left to look at my surroundings. A desk, a fireplace with a gas-log, some chairs sug-

gestive of comfort, a stairway, probably leading to the bridge above. The evidences of the real estate man's genius were becoming apparent. I might have been in the reception hall of any one of a thousand country cottages in the better class suburbs of New York. I had barely made these observations when a door to the right of the stairway opened. In a cottage it would have led to the dining-room, and did so, as I discovered later, on the Billowcrest. A tall, solemn-looking man entered, and I rose, half extending my hand, after the manner of the West.

"Mr. Gale," I said.

The solemn man waved me aside—somewhat nervously it seemed.

"No—I'm—that is, I'm not Mr. Gale. I'm only the—his steward," he explained. "Mr. Gale is—er—somewhat busy just now and would like to know if your errand is im—that is, I should say, a personal matter. Perhaps I—I might answer, you know."

My heart warmed instantly toward this sober-faced man with thin whitening hair and nervous hesitation of manner. I was about to tell him that I only wanted to go over the yacht, and that he would do admirably when I thrilled with a sudden impulse, or it may have been an inspiration.

"Please tell Mr. Gale," I said, "that I am sorry

to disturb him, but that I would really like to see him personally. I will not detain him."

The solemn man retired hastily, leaving the door slightly ajar behind him. I heard him murmur something within, which was followed by a rather quick, hearty response.

"All right, Bill. Newspaper man, I guess,—tell him I'm coming!"

The tall man whose name, it seemed, and inappropriately enough, was Bill, returned with this announcement. Close behind him followed a stout, clear-eyed man of perhaps fifty. A man evidently overflowing with nerve force and energy, appreciative of humor, prompt and keen in his estimate of human nature, and willing to back his judgments with his money. Undismayed and merry in misfortune, joyous and magnanimous in prosperity, scrupulously careful of his credit, and picturesquely careless of his speech—in a word, Chauncey Gale, real estate speculator, self-made capitalist and American Citizen.

I did not, of course, realize all of these things on the instant of our meeting, yet I cannot refrain from setting them down now, lest in the reader's mind there should exist for a moment a misconception of this man to whom I owe all the best that I can ever give.

He came forward and took my hand heartily.

"Set down," he commanded, "and tell us all about it."

"Mr. Gale," I began, "I have been admiring your yacht from the outside, and I came on board to learn more about her purpose—how you came to build her, what you intend to do with her, her dimensions, and so on."

I was sparring for an opening, you see, and then he had taken me for a reporter.

"What paper you on?"

I was unprepared for this and it came near being a knockout. I rallied, however, to the truth.

"I'm on no paper, Mr. Gale; I'm a man with a scheme."

"Good enough! What is it?"

"To go to the South Pole."

We both laughed. There had been no suggestion of annoyance or even brusqueness in Mr. Gale's manner, which was as encouraging as possible, and as buoyant. But half unconsciously I had adopted its directness, and perhaps this pleased him.

"Say, but that's a cool proposition," he commented. "We might get snowed up on that speculation, don't you think so?"

"Well, of course it *might* be a cold day before we got there, but when we did——"

Mr. Gale interrupted.

"Look here," he broke in, "I'm glad you ain't on a paper, anyway. I've not much use for them, to tell the truth. I've paid 'em more'n a million dollars for advertising, and when I built this yacht they all turned in and abused me. They got what they thought was a tip from some sea-captain, who said she wouldn't steer, or float, or anything else, and that I'd never get out of the harbor. Well, she floats all right, doesn't she?"

I looked properly indignant and said that she did.

"I've been around the world twice in her," he continued, "me and my daughter. She isn't fast, that's a fact, but she's fast enough for us, and she suits us first-rate. I don't know whether she'd do to go to the South Pole in or not. I'll tell you how she's built, and what I built her for, and you can see for yourself."

I did not allow myself to consider Mr. Gale's manner or remarks as in the slightest degree encouraging to my plans. The fact that he had cut short my attempted explanation rather indicated, I thought, that this part of our interview was closed.

"I built her myself," he proceeded, "after my own ideas. She's a good deal on the plan of a house we used to live in and liked, at Hillcrest. My daughter grew up in it. Hillcrest was my first addition, and the Billowcrest is my last. I'm a real-estate man, and all the money I ever made, or

lost, came and went in laying out additions. I've laid out and sold fifty-three, altogether. Hillcrest, Stonycrest, Mudcrest, Dingleside, Tangleside, Jungleside, Edgewater, Bilgewater, Jerkwater and all the other Crests and Sides and Hursts and Waters and Manors you've heard of for the past twenty years. I was the first man that ever used the line, 'Quit Paying Rent and Buy a Home,' and more people have quit paying rent and bought homes from me than from any man that ever took space in a Sunday paper. My daughter is a sort of missionary. She makes people good and I sell 'em homes and firesides. Or maybe I sell 'em homes first and she makes 'em good afterwards, so they'll keep up their payments. Whichever way it is, we've been pretty good partners for about twenty-five years, and when the land and spiritual improvement business got overdone around here I built this boat so we could take comfort in her together, and maybe find some place in the world where people still needed homes and firesides, and missionary work. She's two hundred and sixty feet long and fifty feet in the beam, twin screw and carries sixteen thousand square feet of calico besides. She's wide, so she'll be safe and comfortable, and I built her flat so's we could take her into shallow water if we wanted to. She's as stout as a battle-ship and she's took us around the world twice, as I said. We've

had a bully time in her, too, but so far we've found no place in *this* old world where they're suffering for homes and firesides or where they ain't missionaried to death. Now, what's your scheme?"

It seemed the opportune moment. My pulse quickened and stopped as I leaned forward and said:

"It's to *find a new world!*"

"At the South Pole?"

"At the South Pole."

"What's the matter with the North?"

"The North Pole is a frozen sea—a desolation of ice. At the South Pole there is a continent—I believe a warm one."

"What warmed it?"

"The oblation of the earth, which brings the surface there sufficiently near the great central heat to counteract the otherwise low temperature resulting from the oblique angle of the direct solar rays."

I had gone over this so often that in my eagerness I suppose I parroted it off like a phonograph. Gale was regarding me keenly—mystified but interested.

"Look here," he said. "I believe you're in earnest. Just say that again, please; slow, and without any frills, this time."

I was ready enough to simplify.

"Mr. Gale," I began, "you are aware, perhaps, that when we dig down into the earth we find that it becomes rapidly warmer as we descend, so that a

heat is presently reached at which life could not exist, and from this it has been argued that the inner earth is a mass of fire surrounded only by an outer crust of some fifty miles in thickness. We also know by observation and experiment that the diameter of the earth between the poles is some twenty-six miles less than it is at any point on the equator. This is known as the earth's oblation, or, as the school-books have it, the flattening of the poles."

I paused and Gale nodded; apparently these things were not entirely unfamiliar to him. I proceeded with my discourse.

"You will see, therefore, that at each polar axis the earth's surface is some thirteen miles nearer to this great central heat than at the equator, and this I believe to be sufficient to produce a warmth which prevents the great ice-floes of the Arctic Sea from solidifying about the North Pole; while at the South, where there is a continent into which ice-floes cannot be forced, I am convinced that there will some day be found a warm habitable country about the earth's axis. Whoever finds it will gain immortality, and perhaps wealth beyond his wildest dreams."

I had warmed to this explanation with something of the old-time enthusiasm, and I could see that Gale was listening closely. It may have appealed

to his sense of humor, or perhaps the very wildness of the speculation attracted him.

"Say," he laughed, as I finished, "the world turning on its axle would help to keep it warm there, too, wouldn't it?"

I joined in his merriment. The humors of the enterprise were not the least of its attractions.

"But that *would* be a bully place for a real-estate man," he reflected. "First on the ground could have it all his own way, couldn't he? Build and own railroads and trolley lines, and lay out the whole country in additions. Sunnybank, Snowbank, Axis Hill—look here, why ain't anybody ever been there before?"

"Because nobody has ever been prepared to surmount the almost perpendicular wall that surrounds it, or to cross the frozen zone beyond. The ice-wall is anywhere from one to two thousand feet high. I have a plan for scaling it and for drifting over the frozen belt in a balloon to which, instead of a car, there will be attached a sort of large light boat with runners on it, so that it may also be sailed or drawn on the surface, if necessary. The balloon idea is not, of course, altogether new, except——"

But Gale had gone off into another roar of merriment.

"Well, if this ain't the coldest, windiest bluff I ever got up against," he howled. "Think of going

up in a balloon and falling off of an ice-wall two thousand feet high! Oh, Lord! What is home without a door-knob!"

"There does appear to be an element of humor in some phases of my proposition," I admitted, "but I have faith in it, nevertheless, and am quite sincere in my belief of a warm Antarctic world."

"Of course you are. If you hadn't been I wouldn't 'a' let you talk to me for a minute. Let's hear some more about it. Do you think this ship would do? When do you want to start?"

"As for the ship," I hastened to say, "it would almost seem that she had been built for the purpose. With her splendid sailing rig, her coal could be economized, and used only when absolutely necessary. Her light draught makes it possible to take her into almost any waters. The shape of her hull and her strength are calculated to withstand an ice-squeeze, and her capacity is such that enough provisions in condensed forms could be stored away in her hold to last for an almost indefinite length of time. As for starting——"

A cloud had passed over Gale's face at the mention of an ice-squeeze, but now he was laughing again.

"Condensed food! Oh, by the great Diamond Back, but that will hit Bill! That's his hobby. He's invented tablets condensed from every kind of

food under the sun. You saw Bill awhile ago. Used to be my right-hand man in real estate, and is now my steward, from choice. Never had a profitable idea of his own, but honest and faithful as a town clock. What he calls dietetics is his long suit. He don't try many of his experiments on us, but he does on himself; that's why he looks like a funeral. Oh, but we must have Bill along—it'll suit him to the ground!"

He touched a button at his elbow.

"Food tablets might prove a great advantage," I admitted, "especially if we made an extended trip in the balloon."

"Bill can make 'em for us all right. Soup tablets, meat tablets, bread tablets—why, you can put a meat tablet between two bread tablets and have a sandwich, and carry a whole *table d'hôte* dinner in a pill-box. Here, boy, tell Mr. Sturritt to step up here, if he's not busy. Tell him I've got important news for him."

Clearly it was but a huge joke to Mr. Gale. I was willing to enter into the spirit of it, however. He turned to me as the boy disappeared.

"Of course, we can't expect to find anybody living there."

"Why not? Nature never yet left a habitable country unoccupied. We shall undoubtedly find a race of people there—perhaps a very fine one."

He regarded me incredulously a moment, and then thumped the desk at his side vigorously.

"That settles it! Johnnie's missionary work's cut out for her. It's a great combination, and we can't lose! Balloons, tablets, missionary work, and homes and firesides! A regular four-time winner!"

He was about to touch the bell again when there came a light tap at the door near me, and a woman's voice said:

"Mayn't I have some of the fun, too, Daddy?"

My spirits sank the least bit. The mental image I had formed of Miss Gale, the missionary, was not altogether pleasing, while her advent was likely to put a speedy end to any thread of hope I may have picked up during my rather hilarious interview with her father. Gale, meanwhile, had risen hastily to admit her, and I had involuntarily turned. It is true the voice had been not unmusical, but certainly I was wholly unprepared for the picture in the doorway. Tall, lithe and splendid she stood there—the perfect type of America's ideal womanhood.

Gale greeted her eagerly.

"Of *course* you can hear it—I was just going to send for you. Johnnie, here's a young man that's going to take us to the South Pole to convert the heathen there, and provide 'em with homes and firesides. Mr. —," he glanced at my card, which

he had kept in his hand all this time—"Mr. Nicholas Chase, my daughter, Miss Edith Gale, sometimes, by her daddy, called Johnnie, for short."

Miss Gale held out her hand cordially. I took it with no feeling of hesitation that I can now recall. And it seemed to me that I would be willing to go right on holding a hand like that and let the South Pole discover itself, or remain lost through all eternity.

"I have been telling Mr. Chase," Chauncey Gale began, when we were seated, "of our missionary-real-estate combine; how I provide outcast humanity with homes and firesides in this world, and how you look out for a home without too much fireside in it in the next; and how all the territory in this world seems to be pretty well covered in our line. Now he's found for us, or is going to find, he says, a new world where we can do business on a big scale. Is that correct, Mr. Chase?"

I looked at Miss Gale, upon whose face there was an expression, half-aggrieved, half-mystified. For one thing, it was evident that, like myself, she could not be quite certain whether her father was altogether, or only partly, in jest. She beamed graciously on me, however, which was enough.

"Why, how fine that is," she assented. "We have been wishing for some new thing to do, and

some new where to go, but we never dreamed of a new world. If you can take us to one we will reward you—even to the half of our kingdom.”

“Poor trade,” said Gale. “Whole world for half a kingdom. Try again.”

“Oh, well, he shall have”—she hesitated, seeking a way out, then in frank confusion—“he shall name his reward, as they do in the story-books.”

I joined in the laugh. But my heart had grown strangely warm, and my pulses were set to a new measure. I had never fully believed in love at first sight till that moment.

“Tell us your scheme again, Chase,” commanded Gale.

The familiar form of his address stimulated me. I felt that I had known this robust man since the beginning of all things.

“Wait,” he interrupted, “here comes Bill—he must hear it, too. Mr. Chase, I present you to His Royal Tablets, Mr. William Sturritt, caterer extraordinary to the Great Billowcrest Expedition for the discovery and development of the warm Antarctic World. Bill, old man, your tablets are going to have their innings at last. Mr. Chase is just going to tell us how to climb a two thousand foot ice-wall in a balloon.”

I shook hands heartily with the thin, solemn man, who made an anxious attempt to smile and seated

himself rather insecurely on the edge of a chair. Then I began as gravely as possible, and reviewed once more my theories and purpose, adding now the brief but important bits of evidence concerning temperatures and currents, supplied by recent explorers. The warm northerly current reported by Borchgrevink I dwelt upon, and suggested that by following it a vessel might meet with less formidable obstructions in the way of field ice, and perhaps reach the ice barrier at no great distance from the habitable circle beyond. It even might be possible, I said, to follow this current directly to the interior continent, though this I considered doubtful, believing rather that it would flow out from amid fierce and shifting obstructions that would make navigation impracticable.

I then reviewed my plan for scaling the ice barrier and crossing the frozen strip by the aid of a balloon, to which would be attached the light boat-shaped car before mentioned. This car, I said, might be constructed to hold four, possibly six, men. In it could be stored light instruments for photography, observation, etc. Also such furs and clothing as would be needed, and a considerable supply of food in condensed forms.

During this recital I had been interrupted by scarcely a word. Once, when I mentioned the icewall, Gale had put his hands together and mur-

mured to himself, "Oh, Lord, two thousand feet high—now I lay me!" But for the rest of the time he was quite silent and attentive, as were both of the others. Miss Gale (and it was to her that I talked), Edith Gale listened without speaking, moveless, her eyes looking straight into mine, but far beyond me, to the land of which I spoke—a land of fancy—the country of my dreams, now becoming hers. Gale turned to Mr. Sturritt as I finished. The meager face of the latter was flushed and animated. Credulous, visionary and eager, the dream had become his, too. It seemed to me that there was a quality of tenderness in Gale's voice as he addressed him.

"Well, Bill," he said, "what do you think of it? Chance of your life, ain't it? Think of provisioning a voyage to the South Pole. Why, you can fairly wallow in tablets!"

Mr. Sturritt shifted a bit in his chair.

"I think it the most wond—the most marvelous undertaking of the century," he said eagerly, "and the most plaus—er—that is, the most logical. For my own part in it, I may say to Mr. Race—that is, Chase, that I have perfected a sort of system of food tab—I should say lozenges, that might, I believe, be found advantageous in supplying the balloon with food—that is—er—I mean the people *in* the balloon, where space and lightness would be

considerations. They are, I think I may say without claiming—taking credit, that is, for the entire originality of the idea—more nutritious and—er—more wholesome than any other food lozenge I have seen, besides being less bulk—er—I should say—more compact in form, and not so hard to—to—I mean, in fact quite easy——”

“Not so hard to take,” put in Gale. “That’s right, Bill, they’re not bad at all—I’ve tried ’em. I threw a fit afterwards, but that wasn’t your fault—I didn’t take ’em right.”

“Papa insisted on eating all the dessert tablets, because they were pink and flavored with winter-green, and they made him ill,” commented Miss Gale, who seemed to waken from her reverie.

“They should be taken—er—used, I mean, according to direc—that is—in proper sequence,” explained Mr. Sturritt. “White, followed by blue and red, in order to work well—to secure hygienic results, I should say. The white contains the gently stimulating nutriment of meat and bivalve juices, and is—er—the soup course, so to speak. The blue contains the solids required to supply strength, while the pink or rose wafer combines the essence of creams, fruits and nuts—the delicacies, as it were, of food diet. White, blue and red is the proper combi—er—that is—sequence, and I shall soon have other varieties.”

"I thought they ought to go red, white and blue," said Gale, "like the colors in the flag. But, see here, Johnnie, what do you think of Mr. Chase's scheme, anyway? Ain't it a bully chance for opening our business on a big scale?"

"*Please* don't, Daddy," protested Miss Gale. "Mr. Chase must have a very unfair opinion of us from what you have told him. He must stay to luncheon, and learn to know us better."

At this point Mr. Sturritt rose and excused himself.

"I am not really a missionary, you know," Edith Gale continued. "In fact not at all. I have just a little hobby—a very little one—of helping people to better ideals through a truer appreciation of the beautiful in nature." She said this quite unaffectedly—much as a child would explain a little game of its own. I nodded eagerly and she proceeded.

"It has always seemed to me that the people who see only firewood in trees, weather-signs in skies, and water-supply in rivers, miss a good deal of what is best in this world, and are perhaps not so well prepared for what they find in the next. And sometimes even those who care in a way for the beauties of the earth and sky miss a good deal of them, or care not in the best way. Sometimes they cut their trees into queer shapes, or chop away all the pretty tangle of foliage from a river bank, or lay out their

gardens with a square and compass. I sketch and paint a little, and now and then I try to make people realize the beauty as well as the usefulness of nature, and that it's a waste of time to do all those artificial things to it. It is quite simple to explain with pictures, you know, like an object lesson, and I show them that star-shaped flower-beds, and bare river banks, and ornamentally trimmed trees do not make as pretty pictures as they would the other way, and then sometimes I go further and say that maybe children, and grown folks, too, would be better and less artificial themselves if they were taught to care less for nature in its unnatural forms, and more as God made it. Your dream of an Antarctic world and an undiscovered race is very fascinating to me. I, also, have long had a dream of finding such a people, though it is far more likely that I should go to them to learn than to teach."

Chauncey Gale had been watching her admiringly while she spoke. As for myself, if there had been one thing needed to complete my conversion, it was this revelation of her gentle doctrines. Gale, however, could not be long repressed.

"You've no idea how that sort of thing takes with commuters," he said reverentially. "It's sold more additions for me than all my advertising put together."

"Oh, Daddy, how can you!"

"Look at that air of innocence," said Gale, "it would deceive the oldest man living. You know very well, Johnnie, that the Bilgewater lots would never have moved in the world if you hadn't gone out there and got those people all crazy on art values. Why, the art value of every lot in Bilgewater doubled in ten days, and they went off like chromos at a picture auction."

"Papa!" said Miss Gale severely, "I went to Bridgewater, or Bilgewater, as you persist in calling it, and showed the people my pictures out there, because I was invited to do so, and because I saw by their lawns and gardens that they needed me. I had no thought of the material value and sale of your old lots, I can assure you, and I don't believe my going made a particle of difference. If I had thought it possible, I shouldn't have gone."

It was evident that Gale's fond pride in his daughter grew with every sentence.

"She'd deceive anybody in the world, except her old Daddy," he persisted. "Get your pictures, Johnnie, and let Mr. Chase see them."

I hastened to assure Miss Gale that I should consider it a privilege to look at her work, and she rose, leaving me with her father, whose eyes followed her proudly. For myself, I was in a decidedly miscellaneous condition, mentally. I could not permit myself even to hope that Gale really intended to un-

dertake the expedition I had proposed. Yet there had been something about it all that suggested a sincere interest in my plans, in spite of the fact of his rather boisterous and perhaps undue tendency to levity. It seemed to me that his daughter, and his old-time associate, Sturritt, had taken him seriously, and they must know his moods better than I. At most I would not allow myself to do *more* than hope. I had waited so long—I could restrain the frenzy of joy in me a little longer. One thing was assured. I was to sit at luncheon with Edith Gale, and even should there be no voyage to the South, I might hope to see her again, when from time to time I could make the excuse of coming to her father with new sources of amusement. I reflected that I would invent the most absurd propositions that human ingenuity could devise, for Chauncey Gale to play with, if he only would let his daughter take part in the merry pastime.

Gale, meantime, had turned to me, and was about to speak when Miss Gale entered. She was accompanied by a stout, resolute-looking colored woman, bearing a large portfolio.

“Put it right down on the rug, Zar, against the chair, so.”

Miss Gale herself adjusted the heavy book, then seated herself comfortably on the floor beside it. The servant withdrew. Gale slid over to a low

stool, and, half unconsciously, I slipped from my chair to a position on the floor between them. We were like a group of children around a toy book.

The cover of the portfolio was turned back and the first picture, a bit of landscape in water color, was shown. I had no great technical knowledge of art, but I could see at a glance that Miss Gale's work was of unusual quality. The admiration, at first expressed in words, soon became the silence of unquestioned tribute. Yet I was not surprised that Edith Gale should do this masterly work. What did surprise me was the genuine appreciation of her father, as shown by his occasional comment. Evidently the daughter's ability had not been wholly due to the dead mother. At the end of the portfolio there was a series of illustrations for an old Yorkshire ballad.

"Daddy and I always sing this when folks will let us," announced Miss Gale, with an affected diffidence that made her all the more beautiful, I thought.

"You can't get away now till after lunch, Chase," said Gale; "you've got to stand it."

Edith Gale had set the first of the series up before us, and sang the opening lines of the ballad in a voice that might have come from the middle strings of a harp. Then, at the refrain, there joined in a deep, rich resonance that I could hardly realize pro-

ceeded from her father. I came in at the end of the second stanza—feebly at first, but gaining in courage until I sang with volume enough to have spoiled everything had I not been more fortunate than usual and kept to the right key.

“Well,” said Gale, “what do you think? Do you think those pictures and that singing of hers will convert the heathen?”

I looked at the wonderful girl, who was laughing and closing the portfolio.

“They would convert me,” I said fervently, “to anything.”

Gale seemed to enjoy this enthusiasm.

“People mostly like us when they know us, eh, Johnnie?”

But Miss Gale was retiring with the portfolio. He turned to me.

“That’s a great girl,” he said. “The only piece of property but one that I never wanted to part with. The other one was her mother. Johnnie came just in time to take her place, and I don’t know what I’d’ a’ done if she hadn’t. Being a mother to her kept me busy, and she’s been mother and father and whole family to me. She’s kept me going straight for about twenty-five years now, and is about the finest south-slope blue-grass addition that the Lord ever helped lay out. And she cares more for her old daddy than for anybody else in the world.

Her old daddy and her pictures. She never saw a young man that she cared to look at twice, unless he could do something, and then it was for his talents, and not for him. When they fall in love with her she generally gets tired of their paintings, or their music, or whatever it is, and they go away. They all seem to do it, though. You'd be in love with her yourself in a week, if you lingered about this ship. It's in the air, and everybody gets it. I wouldn't say much about it, though, if it was me. If we should go to the South Pole, you'd want to stay with the expedition, and after we got out to sea you'd have some trouble getting ashore again in case you didn't find the ship comfortable. There's another young man that comes here. He's got a scheme for——"

But Miss Gale re-entered at that moment. She had made some slight changes in her toilet, and was more entrancing than ever. Her father had been right, I thought, only he had named too long a period. He had said "in a week." His prophecy was already fulfilled.

"I say, Johnnie," greeted Gale, "why wouldn't our wireless telegraphy scheme go well with this expedition, especially with the balloon part? How about that, Chase? Would it fit in?"

"Perfectly, but Marconi seems to have it all in his own hands, as yet."

"Not by a jug-full! Johnnie's got a young man, I was just going to mention him when she came in, a sort of portigee——"

"*Protégé Papa!* Though he's not that, either. He's——"

"Oh, well, *protyshay*, then. Anyway, he's got a system that beats Macarony's to death. I call this chap Macarony, too, because he's Italian, and his name is a good deal the same."

"His name is Ferratoni, Papa, and the other isn't Macaroni, either, but Marconi. Papa never calls anything by its right name, if he can help it," she apologized. "He gets into dreadful trouble sometimes, too, and I'm glad of it. He should be more particular."

"All right, then, it's Ferry—Ferry what? How is it again, Johnnie?"

"Fer-ra-toni."

"Now we've got it. Oh, well, let's compromise and call him Tony, for short. Well, Tony's got a system that does all that Macarony's does, and goes it one better. Obstructions in the way don't seem to make much difference, and you can use it with a telephone attachment instead of a—a what do you call it—a knocker?"

"A sounder, Daddy."

"A sounder, that's it, instead of a sounder. We tried it here the other day, and could talk to him

over in the Tract building as well as if we'd been connected with the central office. He's perfecting it now for long distance, and we might take him right along with us, and let him experiment between the balloon and the ship. How's that?"

"It would complete our plans perfectly," I agreed, "if his system of communication prove successful. But do you think he would care to go on such a voyage?"

Gale looked at his daughter.

"Do you think he would go, Johnnie?" he asked, and I thought there was a suggestion of teasing in his voice. Also, it seemed to me that there was a little wave of confusion in Miss Gale's face, though the slight added color there may have been due to other causes.

"I—why, I think he might——" she began hesitatingly. "I think he would consider it an opportunity. He is deeply interested in what he calls chorded vibrations. Wireless telegraphy, or telephoning, is like that, you know, but Mr. Ferratoni goes much farther. He attributes everything to vibrations. He analyzes my poor little hobby until there's nothing left of it. He may be here to luncheon to-day, and you can talk with him," she added, and I thought the blush deepened.

Assuredly he would come to luncheon, and of a certainty he would go to the South Pole, or any-

where that Edith Gale went, and would let him go. It was too late now, however, for me to raise objections. My only comfort lay in the memory of her father's assurance that it was in their talents, and not in her protégés themselves, that his daughter was interested.

Still, I argued miserably, there must some day come a time—I was sure she had blushed——

A cabin boy entered bearing a tray on which there was a card. He presented it to Miss Gale.

"Mr. Ferratoni," she said, glancing at it, and an instant later I saw in the doorway a slender figure, surmounted by a beautiful beardless face—the face of southern Italy—of a poet.

My heart sank, but I greeted him cordially, for I could not withstand the beauty of his face and the magnetism of his glance. It seemed to me that it was a foregone conclusion, so far as Miss Gale was concerned, and then I suddenly realized that the South Pole without Edith Gale would not be worth looking for. Even a whole warm Antarctic continent would be a desolation more bleak than people had ever believed it. Yet I would find it for her if I could—and then my reward—she had said I should name it—it had been but a jest, of course——

I realized that Miss Gale was speaking.

"We were just talking of you, Mr. Ferratoni. We have a plan which we think will interest you. Mr. Chase will talk to us about it during luncheon."

VI.

WHERE ALL THINGS BECOME POSSIBLE.

WE passed out into the dining saloon—a counterpart, I learned later, of the dining-room in Mr. Gale's former cottage at Hillcrest. We were presently joined by a stout and grizzled man of perhaps sixty, with a slight sinister obliquity in one eye. He was arrayed in a handsome blue uniform, and was presented to me as Mr. Joseph Biffer, captain of the Billowcrest. I was pleasantly surprised to see that Mr. Sturritt was also to be with us. The customs on the Billowcrest, as I presently learned, were quite democratic, and William Sturritt, though nominally steward, remained the trusted friend and companion of Chauncey Gale, as he had been for many years. It is true there was an officers' mess, at which both Mr. Sturritt and Captain Biffer usually preferred to dine, but at the Admiral's table (they had conferred the title of Admiral on Gale) there was always a welcome for his officers, while on occasions such as this they were often present by request. Gale and his daughter were seated at op-

posite ends of the table, Ferratoni and myself next Miss Gale, while Captain Biffer and Mr. Sturritt occupied the same relative position to the Admiral.

The Admiral wasted no time in coming to the fun.

"Captain Biffer," he said, "we want you to take us to the South Pole."

Mr. Biffer continued the grim process of seasoning his soup for several seconds without replying. Perhaps some rumor of the expedition had already come to him. Then he fixed his sound eye severely on Gale, while he withered the rest of us, and particularly myself, with the other.

"When do you want to start?" he asked.

There was that about Mr. Biffer's tone and attitude which indicated, so far as he was concerned, an entire lack of humor in the proposition. Even Gale, I thought, seemed a trifle subdued as he answered:

"Oh, I don't know; we'll consider that after Mr. Chase has told us what we are going to need to be ready. In three or four months, perhaps."

Once more the deflected vision of Captain Biffer laid its scorn heavily upon us.

"And get down there and stuck in the ice below Cape Horn about the middle of March, just when their winter and six months' night begins."

It was a clean hit for the Captain, and I gave him credit. Gale was clearly out of it for the time be-

ing, and looked at me helplessly. His very dismay, however, encouraged me. A man must be in earnest, I thought, to look like that. I hastened to his rescue.

"I have naturally considered the Antarctic solar conditions," I said, with some dignity, though I confess that with the Captain's piercing search-light upon me, the latter was not easy to maintain. "I am aware that their seasons are opposed to ours, and that the year at the poles is divided into a day and a night of six months each."

Gale, who had been regarding me anxiously, at this point relieved himself in an undertone.

"Six months," he murmured. "Think of going out to make a night of it in a country like that! Oh, Lord, what is life without a latch-key?"

"I have considered these facts," I repeated, "and while a period of several months of semi-darkness and cold is not a cheering anticipation to those accustomed to the more frequent recurrence of sunlight, I am convinced that, under favorable conditions, it is not altogether a hardship; also, that in the pleasant climate which I believe exists about the earth's axis, the extended interval of darkness and semi-twilight would be still less disturbing, and may have been overcome in a measure, or altogether, by the inhabitants there, through artificial means."

I could see that Chauncey Gale was reviving somewhat as I proceeded, and this gave me courage to continue, in spite of the fact that the Captain's contempt was only too manifest. As for Mr. Sturritt, he was non-committal, while Ferratoni appeared to have drifted off into a dream of his own. But Edith Gale sustained me with the unshaken confidence in her eyes, and my strength became as the strength of ten.

"As for the time of starting," I continued——

"Wait," interrupted Gale, "go over the whole scheme again for the benefit of those who didn't hear it before. Then we can consider ways and means afterwards."

Accordingly, and for the third time that day, I carefully reviewed my theories and plans for the expedition. As I proceeded I observed that Captain Biffer's contempt softened into something akin to pity, while, on the other hand, Chauncey Gale rapidly regained his buoyant confidence.

"That's where you come in, Bill," he laughed, as I spoke of the balloon car and its condensed stores.

Mr. Sturritt nodded eagerly.

"And you, Johnnie," as I referred again to the possible inhabitants in the undiscovered world.

"And Mr. Ferratoni is not to be left out," answered Miss Gale. "Mr. Chase says that a wire-

less telephone is the one thing needed to make his plan perfect."

"To keep the balloon in communication with the ship, in event of our making the voyage overland would be of the greatest advantage," I admitted, "if it can be done."

Ferratoni's face flushed.

"Yes, oh, yes," he said anxiously, "it can be done. It is the chance."

"And would you be willing to go on a voyage like that, and leave behind your opportunities of recognition and fortune?" I asked.

Ferratoni's face grew even more beautiful.

"Fortune? Recognition?" He spoke musically, and his English was almost perfect. "It is not those that I would care for. It is the pursuing of the truth, the great Truth! Electricity—it is but one vibration. There are yet many others—thought, life, soul! Wireless communication—the answering of electric chords—it is but a step toward the fact, the proving of the Whole Fact. To-day we speak without wires across the city. Later, we shall speak across the world. Still later, between the worlds—perhaps even—yes, yes, I will go! I have but shown the little step. I would have the time and place to continue. And then the new world too—yes, oh, yes, I will go, of a certainty!"

A respectful silence had fallen upon the table.

Chauncey Gale's face showed thoughtful interest. Mr. Biffer was evidently impressed. Me he had regarded as a crazy land-lubber with fool notions of navigation. In Ferratoni he acknowledged a man of science—a science he did not understand and therefore regarded with reverence and awe. Edith Gale's face wore the exalted expression which always gave it its greatest beauty. For myself, I had been far from unmoved by Ferratoni's words. I felt that it would be hard to feel jealousy for a man like that, and still harder not to do so. Gale recovered first, and turned to me.

"What about the superintending of the balloon?" he asked. "Who have you got for that?"

I knew as little of practical ballooning as of navigation, but as a boy I had experimented in chemistry, and the manufacture of gases. More lately I had done some reading, and I had ideas on the subject. I said therefore, with becoming modesty, that I had made some study of aeronautics and that, as the science had not yet progressed much beyond the first principles of filling a bag with gas and waiting until the wind was in the right quarter, I believed I might safely undertake to oversee this feature of the enterprise, including the construction of the boat-sledge-car combination.

"And I can take a hand in that, too," said Gale.

"I've got a pretty good mechanical head myself: I've planned and built about a million houses, first and last. Commuters say I can get more closets and cubbyholes into a six-room cottage than anybody else could set on the bare lot. I'll take care of that boat. Now, how about the time, Chase? When do we start?"

"I had thought," I answered, "that it might require a year for preparation. If we started a year from now, or a little later, we would reach the Antartics easily by the beginning of the day or summer season, and might, I believe, hope to reach a desirable position at or near the ice-barrier by the beginning of the winter night. During this we would make every added preparation for the inland excursion to be undertaken on the following summer——"

"Say, we'd be apt to get some frost on our pumpkins laying up against an ice-wall through a six months' night, wouldn't we?" interrupted Gale.

I called attention to the comfort with which Nansen and his associates had passed through an Arctic night with far fewer resources than we should have on a vessel like the *Billowcrest*.

"Look here," said Gale, "what's the use of waiting a year? Why not go *this* year?"

"Why," I suggested, "we could hardly get ready. There will be food supplies to get together,

instruments, implements, the balloon, and then the engaging of such scientists as you might wish to take along——”

“Scientists,” interrupted Gale, “what kind?”

“Well, perhaps a meteorologist, a geologist, an ornithologist——”

“See here, what are all those things? What are they for?”

“To observe and record conditions,” I said. “An ornithologist, for instance, would classify and name any new birds that we might find in the Southern Hemisphere, and an——”

“Hold on,” interrupted Gale, “we don’t want any of that yet. We’ll discover the country first. We’ve got science enough right here to do that, I guess, if anybody has. Besides I’m a pretty good hand at naming things myself, and if we find any strange animals or birds wandering about down there without titles, I’ll just give ’em some.”

“Oh, Papa,” laughed Miss Gale.

“Why, yes, of course; and now as to those other things. Mr. Sturritt here can give an order in five minutes for enough provision to last ten years, and have it on board in twenty-four hours. Whatever instruments and material you need for your balloon and telephone machine can be had about as quick, I’m thinking, and if we need any mechanics of any kind I can put my finger on a hundred of them to-

morrow. If we've got to lay up six months against an ice-wall we'll want something to do, and will have time enough to build things to fit the case in hand. What I want to know is, if we can be ready to start from here in a week, so's we'll miss this winter up here and get safe in the arms of that ice-wall before winter sets in down there! I'm simply pining to get up against that two thousand foot ice-bluff, and I don't want to wait a year to do it. What do *you* say, Bill, can we be ready to start from here in a week?"

My heart sank. It was but a huge joke then, after all, and this was his way out of it. But Sturritt, who knew him, was taking it seriously.

"Yes—that is—why certainly, in—er—three days!" he said with nervous haste.

"I can be ready to-morrow," said Ferratoni, quietly.

"I am ready to start to-night," said Edith Gale.

I hastened to add that the materials needed for the balloon could doubtless be procured without delay.

"And you, Biffer?" Gale turned to the Captain who had been a silent unprotesting martyr during this proceeding. "Are you ready to start in a week for the South Pole?"

"Admiral," said the Captain solemnly, and making a sincere effort to fix him with both eyes at once,

"you own this boat and I'm hired to sail it. I don't believe in no South Pole, but if there *is* one, I don't know of a better place for a crowd like this. And if you give the order to go to the South Pole, I'll *take* you to the South Pole, and sail off into space when we get there, if you say so!"

Mr. Biffer's remarks were greeted with applause and a round of merriment in which the Captain paid himself the tribute of joining.

"We'll have the balloon for navigating space, Captain Biffer," said Edith Gale.

"And my opinion is that we'll need it, ma'am, if we ever get back."

But amid the now general enthusiasm Chauncey Gale had sprung to his feet. There was a flush of excitement on his full handsome face, and when he spoke there was a ring of decision in his voice.

"Everybody in favor of starting a week from to-day, for the South Pole, stand up!" he said.

There was a universal scramble. Captain Biffer was first on his feet. Gale seized a glass of wine and holding it high above his head, continued:

"To the Great Billowcrest Expedition! Missionary work for Johnnie; electricity for Ferratoni; balloons for Chase; tablets for Bill; the ship for the Captain; homes and firesides for me, and *the South Pole for us all!*"

VII.

I LEARN THE WAY OF THE SEA, AND ENTER MORE
FULLY INTO MY HERITAGE.

THE sun lifting higher above Long Island touched the spray under the bow and turned it into a little rainbow that traveled on ahead. I leaned far out to watch this pleasant omen of fortune, endeavoring meanwhile to realize something of the situation, now that we were finally under way and the years of youth and waiting, of empty dreams and disappointments, lay all behind.

It had been a week to be remembered. A whirl of racing from ship to shop, and from shop to factory—of urging and beseeching on my part, of excuses and protestations on the part of tradesmen and manufacturers. I had been almost despairing at last in the matter of material for the balloon bag, when one morning—it was the fourth day—I heard of a very large completed balloon, made to order for an aeronaut whose old one had missed connection with it by one day. When they had come to de-

liver it, the undertaker was just driving off, and the aeronaut had made his farewell ascension.

I found it to be of really enormous proportions—one of the largest ever manufactured, I was told—so large, in fact, that the maker was as glad to part with it as I was to secure it.

My associates also had been somewhat occupied. Mr. Sturritt's delivery teams had been lined up on the Billowcrest dock from morning till night, unloading provisions in various forms, enough it would seem for an army. Ferratoni had laid in his cells, coils, transmitters, detectors and heaven only knows what besides, while Miss Gale had undertaken to supply, in addition to her own requirements, the warm clothing and bedding likely to be needed for an Antarctic winter.

As for Chauncey Gale, he had sat all day at a little table on the after-deck and signed checks; checks, many of them, that would have wrecked my former commercial venture at any time during the ten years of its existence; and he whistled as he did it, and called out words of comfort to Captain Biffer, who, with a fierce eye on each end of the vessel, strode up and down where boxes, barrels, rolls, rope, chains, etc., were piled or still coming over the side—rending the Second Commandment into orders and admonitions that would have turned a clergyman gray in a night.

Now it was all over. The weird maelstrom of whirling days and nights that had added unreality to what was already dreamlike and impossible, had subsided. We were going down the harbor under full sail. Leaving the others still at breakfast, I had come out here alone to find myself.

I could not grasp it at all. The little farm boy who in the night had wakened and cried for the sea, going back to it, at last. The youth who had carried into manhood the fancy of a fair unknown land, and of one day sailing away to the South to find it, entering suddenly into an Aladdin-like realization of his dreams. It seemed to me that every vessel in the harbor ought to be decorated and firing salutes—that every soul of the vast city ought to be waving us adieu.

To be sure, we hadn't told anybody. Gale was rather down on the papers, and we had left so suddenly that they had little chance to find out what we were doing. One of them—that of the millionaire editor—got an inkling of it in some way, and in its Sunday Magazine of two days before had filled a page with strange vagaries purporting to be our plans, and disturbing pictures of the lands and people we expected to discover. But as no one ever believes anything printed in a Sunday newspaper, even when backed up by sworn statements, these things appeared to have passed unnoticed.

There had been one exception, however; my scientist of the snark and flipper, who had appeared on Monday morning to enter his promised protest.

He came at a busy time. About a hundred teams were backing into each other on the dock, whence arose a medley of unjoyous execration, and a line of men were waiting at Gale's little table for checks. It was this auspicious moment that my scientist selected for his mission. Captain Biffer, to whom he first appealed, acknowledged him with an observation which no magazine would print, and waved him toward Gale.

"There's the man *you* want," he snorted, "that man over there giving his money away."

Chauncey Gale was at that moment engaged in constructing a check that ran well into four figures. He paused, however, with his hand on the way to the ink-bottle and listened for a moment with proper respect. Then he said, quite serenely:

"I wonder if you couldn't conveniently go to hell for about three years. Perhaps by then I'll have time to listen to you. You notice we're pretty busy. this morning."

I smiled now, recalling how the human seal had flopped backwards over a box of cod-fish and narrowly missed pitching overboard in his anxiety to get ashore. There had been no further interference, and no offered encouragement. We were

leaving it all behind, now; the narrow, busy, indifferent world. There were no salutes, and if there were any flags, or waving, I did not see them. Nobody had been down to see us off, and impudent tugs steamed by and splashed water at us, just as if we were going out for a day's sail, and would be back in time for the roof gardens.

Somewhat later I was joined by Edith Gale. It is customary to say "as fresh as the morning," when referring to a fair woman at such a time, but, rare as the morning was, I could not have paid it a finer tribute than to have compared it to Edith Gale.

She came forward and leaned over at the other side of the bow-sprit.

"How pretty the little rainbow is this morning," she said, looking down.

"Yes, I have been accepting it as an omen of success."

Edith Gale laughed.

"I hope it doesn't mean that we are pursuing a rainbow. We never quite capture it, you see."

"I have been called a rainbow chaser all my life," I answered, a little sadly.

"I suppose there is always some rainbow just ahead of us all," she mused. "Even if we find the South Pole, and all the things we expect there, then something else will come to wish for and look forward to."

"I am sure of it," I answered fervently, "I——"

Her father's warning recurred to me opportunely. We were not yet out of the harbor, and I did not wish to be set ashore at Sandy Hook.

"There is the ocean," she said presently, "the Atlantic Ocean. How I love it!"

We had already caught the slight swell from the sea. The added exhilaration of it filled me with exultant joy. I stood up and drew in a deep breath of the salt ambrosia.

"Oh," I said, "it is wine—nectar! It is my birthright—I have always known that I should come back to it, some day!"

Instinctively we turned for a last look at the harbor we were leaving. Farther down the deck Ferratoni was pointing out some landmark to Chauncey Gale, while from the bridge Captain Biffer was taking a silent and solemn farewell of the sky-scrapers of Manhattan. Mr. Sturritt presently came out of the cabin, beaming, and looked out to sea. The land had no further attraction for him. Our provision and the materials for his tablets were safely on board.

We faced seaward again. We were through the Narrows now, and the swell was much stronger, a long steady swing. I heard the Captain give a word of command to the helmsman and noticed that we were turning to the southward. A shoreless expanse of ocean lay ahead.

"I should think all this would appear like a dream to you," said Edith Gale. "Aren't you afraid you'll wake up?"

"I have been trying to find something to convince me that I *am* awake," I said.

"How splendid it was that Papa took up with your plans. You know he has all sorts of things brought to him. A man came to him not long ago with some scheme for buying stocks that he said would pay a hundred per cent. a week on the investment. Papa gave him a dollar, and told him that if his theory was correct he didn't need any partner, for the dollar would make him rich in six months."

The pitch of the vessel became stronger. Then, too, it was not always regular. Sometimes it swung off a bit to one side, and just when I felt that it ought to lift us buoyantly and sustainingly it would disappoint me by sinking away beneath us—falling down-hill, as it were—or it would change its mind at the last minute and conclude to fall down some other hill, or perhaps give up the notion altogether. I grew discontented and wished it wouldn't do these things. There was a bit of tarred lashing on the bow-sprit near us. In the harbor the smell of it had been fine and inspiring, but it did not attract me any more. It had become rather obnoxious, in fact, and I moved a little to

one side to avoid it. Neither did I feel inclined to laugh at Edith Gale's story. Somehow it did not seem altogether in good taste. Perhaps she was disappointed, for she referred to my own plans.

"And to think that Papa should believe in you from the start. He said he had never seen any one so much in earnest about anything as you were in your determination to find the South Pole."

"Yes—oh, yes," I admitted weakly, "I was in earnest, of course—but——"

The ship gave a peculiar roll and the salt spray came flying up from below. Some of it got into my mouth. It took away any remaining interest I may have had in Miss Gale's conversation. I did not care for the South Pole, either, and the rainbow of promise had become a mockery. I remembered a particularly steady bit of rock in one of my father's meadows. As a child this rock had been the ship on which I had voyaged through billowing seas of grass. I would have been willing now to give all my interest in both poles, the ship, and even in Miss Gale herself, to cruise once more for five minutes on that rock.

Edith Gale wiped the water from her own face, laughing merrily.

"I love the sea spray," she said gaily, "can you taste the gold in it?"

I shook my head miserably.

"A man came to Papa, once, with a scheme to extract the gold from it," she ran on. "Papa told him that there was so much water that he guessed he'd wait till the patent on the process became public, or ran out. Do you suppose there really is gold in it?"

I could not answer immediately.

"Do you suppose there *is*?" she repeated, and I thought there was a note of injury in her voice.

"Oh, I don't know," I groaned wretchedly, "but I know what *will* be there, pretty soon, if this ship doesn't stand still!"

She turned a startled face toward me. She said afterwards that all the colors of the ocean were reflected in mine. She had been ready to laugh at first, but her expression became one of compassion.

"Oh," she said, "I never thought, I am such a good sailor—and the bow is the very worst place for that. You must go back amid-ships. You are seasick—I am sure of it!"

"So am I," I gasped, "and I am also sure, now, that I am not dreaming!"

I stumbled feebly back to a steamer-chair and looked out on the horizon that one instant sank far below the rail, and the next, lifted as far above it. Between lay the tossing sea—my heritage. That which my ancestors had lived and died for. I did not blame them for dying—I was willing to

do that, myself. Chauncey Gale came along just then.

"I've got a great scheme for the balloon boat," he began, "a combination wind and water propeller. Ferratoni can supply the power, and——"

He caught my expression just then and the words died in his throat.

"Hello," he laughed, "you've got 'em, haven't you? Storm last week left it a little rough. Do you always get sick this way at sea?"

"I—yes—I don't know. It—it's my first experience."

Gale regarded me with an amazement that was akin to respect.

"Oh, Lord!" he gasped. "Never been to sea before and planned a trip to the South Pole! What's a bluff without a show-down!"

"Do you think I'll be like this all the way?" I asked.

"Oh, pshaw! No! I'll have Bill give you some of his tablets. You'll be all right enough by lunch time."

The suggestion of a food tablet at this particular time was the last thing needed. I went hastily below.

Gale's prediction was not quite realized. I was absent from luncheon, but before evening the spirit of my ancestors rose within me—perhaps because

there was nothing else left for that purpose—and I ascended to the dinner table.

“ Well, you’ve concluded that this voyage is no dream, have you? ” greeted Gale.

“ A good many more will come to that conclusion before it’s over,” growled Captain Biffer, who was present.

Across the table, the place of Ferratoni was vacant. Edith Gale, radiant, beamed upon me. I could afford to laugh, now, and did so.

And thus it was I came fully into my heritage.

VIII.

THE HALCYON WAY TO THE SOUTH.

A COLD plunge next morning in water combed up from the very bottom of the sea was my final baptismal ceremony. Fully restored I hastened on deck. Chauncey and Edith Gale were already there, walking briskly up and down, and I joined in the joyous march. A faint violet bank showed on the western horizon. Looking through a glass I could see that it was solid and unchanging in outline. It was land, they explained; we were off Cape Charles, and would pass Hatteras during the afternoon. I remembered an account in my old Fifth Reader of "The Last Cruise of the Monitor." It had been always my favorite selection in the reading class. It gave me a curious feeling now to know that we were soon to pass over the waters where the sturdy little fighter had gone down. However, I had no longer a sense of unreality in my surroundings. I had been too thoroughly waked up the day before.

We were presently joined by Ferratoni—spiritually pale, but triumphant. I was not sorry, for I

could not help caring for the man, and it seemed to me that after all his devotion to Edith Gale might be rather a tribute to an ideal than a genuine passion of the heart. We ascended to the bridge where we found the First Officer on watch. His name was Larkins—Terence Larkins—a sturdy Newfoundlander of forty, whose life ashore had been limited to childhood only—a period now lost in the cloudland of myth and fable. He had no prejudices concerning our destination. He was ready at any moment to go anywhere that the sea touched, and to maintain a pleasant discourse at any stage of the journey. He was big and blond, with a touch of ancestry in his speech and a proper disregard of facts—a merry Munchausen of the sea. He saluted as we approached, and pointed shoreward.

“Farmers’ day ashore,” he said, with a serious air. “All the farmers come to the beach to-day for their annual shwim.”

“Is this the day?” I asked, looking where he pointed. “I’ve heard of it, but I had forgotten the date.”

“Sure it is, man; an’ can’t ye see thim over there, dhriving down to the beach with their teams? An’ thim fellies puttin’ up the limonade shtands, an’ merry-go-rounds fer the farrmer lads an’ their shweetheartses?”

I reached for the glass and took a long look. The solid purple wall was as solid and purple as it had been before.

"No, really, Mr. Larkins," I admitted, "I do not."

"Let *me* look, Larkins," said Gale.

He leveled the glass and began to testify.

"Why, of course! And there's a new addition laid out just below, and a little sign stuck up with—let me see—M-A-R-S-H-S-I-D-E on it. Well, that's a funny name for an addition, 'Marshside!'"

Edith Gale seized the glass. After a hasty glance she declared:

"Of course Mr. Chase couldn't see anything! And you and Mr. Larkins didn't, either."

Ferratoni who had been gazing through another glass also shook his head. Chauncey Gale and Mr. Larkins joined in a hearty laugh at our expense.

"Oh, now," consoled the latter, "it's because yer eyes are not thrained to lookin' over the sea. By the time ye get back from the South Pole they'll be opened to a great many things."

There came the summons to breakfast and we went below—certainly with no reluctance on my part, this time.

And now passed beautiful days; glorious ship-board days to which the slight uncertainty of a rival's relative position gave only added zest. Fer-

ratoni, it is true, may have had somewhat different views in this matter. He was obliged to spend the greater part of his time with Gale in the modeling of the new electrical propelling apparatus, which the latter was perfecting for the balloon. In the matter of constructive detail my assistance was not highly regarded by Gale who had really a mechanical turn of mind, as the *Billowcrest* itself proved; for whatever may have been the vessel's faults from the seaman's standpoint it was certainly all that a landsman could desire. Below stairs there was a splendidly appointed workshop, and the engineers on the *Billowcrest* were also skilled workers in wood and metals. The boat-car for the *Cloudcrest*, as we had decided to name the balloon, was a matter of daily discussion among us all, but at the point of technical intricacy I was promptly relieved for the good of all concerned.

It was but natural, therefore, that I should be a good deal in Edith Gale's company. Also that I should feel a gentle solicitude for Ferratoni—a sweet soul whom all presently grew to love; it seemed too bad that he should not come in for his full share of paradise. My own fancies had been called poetic, but I realized daily that Ferratoni lived in a world which to me could be never more than borderland. And this I hoped consoled him somewhat for what he was missing by tinkering

away his days with Gale on a dynamo for my balloon car, while I was revelling in the seventh delight of the daughter's company, above stairs.

We cared for pretty much the same things. We liked to walk up and down the decks, discussing the books we had read, the pictures we had seen, and the purpose and possibilities of art.

"Beauty, the secret of the universe,
The thought that gives the soul eternal peace."

was the quotation most frequently on her lips.

She had seen so much more of the world and its glories than I, and her understanding of nature was a marvel to me. She taught me to see colors that I had been blind to before. Sometimes she brought up her materials and sketched, while I looked on and loved her. When she would let me I photographed her. One day I ventured to show her some verses that I had written, and the fact that she really seemed to care for them gave me a higher opinion of us both.

And the sea racing past made a fine accompaniment to these pleasant things. She liked to watch the surge along the side and listen to its music. So did I, and often together we leaned over the rail to watch and hear it rush by.

We discussed metaphysics, and talked of life, and love, and death, Remembering Chauncey Gale's

advice, I was careful to avoid the personal note at such times. Ferratoni had touched now and then upon his theories in these matters, and these suggested speculations of our own. I was not displeased to find that Edith Gale did not quite accord with, or perhaps altogether grasp, his filmy philosophies. I preferred that she should be less ethereal—what she was, in fact—a splendid reality of flesh and blood and soul, with a love of all the joys of earth and sky. The clouds scudding across the blue, the white joy of the sunlit sails, the smash of the spray over the bow, a merry game of shuffle-board, and even hop-sotch—these things gave her life and sustenance—and then, at the end of the day, came the good dinner, and the untroubled sleep of a healthy child.

IX.

ADMONITION AND COUNSEL.

OUR progress southward was hurried. We had touched at Charleston for a full supply of coal, but we were sailing under canvas only. It was still bleak winter below Cape Horn, and we did not wish to enter those somber seas before November, the beginning of the Antarctic spring.

Sometimes Edith Gale and I drew steamer chairs to the extreme bow of the boat, and looking away to the horizon, imagined the land of our quest lying just beyond. At night, from this point, we watched the new constellations of the tropics rising from the sea, and those of the North falling back, behind us.

Chauncey Gale and Ferratoni frequently joined us, and at times I was constrained through courtesy to leave Ferratoni and Edith Gale together. Perhaps it was not quite wise—the stars and sea form a dangerous combination to a man like Ferratoni.

After one such evening I was taking a morning constitutional on the deck forward when I saw a

female figure emerge from the cabin. Edith Gale had often joined me in these walks, but it was not she. Neither was it our stewardess—a brawny, non-committal Scotch woman, of whom Mr. Sturritt, though her superior in rank, stood in wholesome awe. It proved to be Miss Gale's maid and former nurse, the stout colored woman, Zarelda, or Zar, as she was commonly called. Miss Gale had long since told me of some of the peculiar sayings and eccentricities of this privileged person, but thus far my interest in her had been rather casual. Now, however, she planted herself at one end of my promenade and sternly faced my approach. I bade her a respectful and even engaging "good morning" as I came on, but the severity of her features did not relax. She nodded ominously, and proceeded to open fire.

"Look heah," she demanded, "I wan' know wheah you gwine wid dis ship?"

"Why, down to the Antarcotics," I said winningly. "I thought everybody knew that."

I felt a sense of relief in being able to answer so readily. It seemed I was not quite through, however.

"Yes, down to Aunt Ar'tics!" she snorted, "I should say down to Aunt Ar'tics! I like to know whose kinfolks dat Aunt 'Ar'tics is, anyway! I ain' nevah heard o' none o' Mistah Gale's people

by dat name, an' if she some o' yo' po' relation, I don' see what foh *we*-all mus' go trailin' off down to de mos' Godforlonesomest spot on dis earth, to visit in de dead o' wintah. An' what my Miss Edith goin' foh, anyway? What my Miss Edith got to do wid yo' old Aunt Ar'tics, dat's what I wan' to know? Humph! moah antics dan Ar'tics—dat's what I think!"

My emotions during this assault had been rather conflicting, but I managed to maintain a proper degree of calmness.

"Why," I said gravely, "this 'Antarctics' bears a relationship to us all—to the whole world, in fact."

I rather prided myself on the cleverness of this rejoinder, but it appeared after all to have been rather poorly thought out.

"Dat's enough! Dat settles it," she exploded. "Now I know mighty well dey ain' no sech pussun. Kinfolks to de whole worl'. Look heah, me an' my Miss Edith has jes' been deceptified long enough! I know wheah you gwine wid dis boat! You gwine to de Souf Pole—dat's wheah you gwine! I done heah de Cap'n say so las' night, an' dat when he got dar he gwine to sail her off into space wid de whole kit an' possum of us! I know mighty well somp'n gone wrong when I put Miss Edith to baid. She ain' said two words, an' befoah dat she been

mighty chipper de whole trip. I didn't know what it was, an' I set an' hol' her han' an' sing to her, an' it seem like she ain' *nevah* goin' to sleep. But bimeby when I slip up on deck a li'l', to look at de sky, I heah de Cap'n an' Mistah Lahkins argifyin' up on de bridge, an' I heah de Cap'n say dat we goin' to de Souf Pole an', 'scusin' de libe'ty, sah, dat you gone plum crazy on de subjec', and dat you got de Admiral an' Mistah Macarony an' Mistah Sturritt all crazy, laikewise; an' dat he gwine to sail you-all to de Souf Pole, case dat wheah you-all b'long, an' dat you-all *nevah* get home, case when he get dere he gwine straight off into space wid de ship, an' de whole caboodle in it. An' den right away, I knowed what's de mattah wid my Miss Edith. I knowed she been up dar a-hearin' somp'n, too. An' I make up my min', right den an' dar, dat me an' my Miss Edith ain' gwine. I like to see me an' my Miss Edith flyin' off into space, an' us wid no wings yit, an' fallin' down to de bottomless pit an' lake o' fiah! Humph! We's gwine de other way, we is!"

She hesitated a moment for breath, and I took advantage of the recess.

"What did Mr. Larkins say about it?" I asked.

"Mistah Lahkins! Humph, Mistah Lahkins! What he always say? He jes' laugh an' say dat de Souf Pole 'bout de onliest stick o' timbah he ain'

tie up to yit, but he reckon dat it strong enough to hol' us f'm gwine off into space. Anyway, he willin' to take chances wid de res'. 'An' de Cap'n say, 'Dat's all right, same here,' but dat de bosen, Frenchy, been talkin' 'roun' 'mong de sailors, an' dat some get mighty oneasy an' wan' to be put ashoah. An' dat's what *I* want. I wan' me an' my Miss Edith put ashoah. Den if you-all *mus'* go on aftah de Souf Pole, why jes' *go*, and leave me an' my Miss Edith to go back home; an' nex' time tell folks wheah you gwine, an' not make out like you takin' all dis perwision down to some po' kinfolks dat everybody related to, an' nobody don't know about."

There was another brief intermission. The incident was entertaining enough, but there was a grave note in it as well. In the bosen, Frenchy, I recognized the sailor who on the first day had barred my entrance to the Billowcrest. I recalled my unfavorable impression of the man. He would be altogether the one, I thought, to stir up discontent among the sailors—an unpleasant prospect.

"Please, sah, won't you put me an' my Miss Edith ashoah, sah?" In my more serious consideration I had temporarily forgotten Zar's presence. She had believed me hesitating, perhaps, and had adopted a persuasive tone in consequence. "Miss

Edith mighty sad las' night," she added, "an' I know you don' want dat po' gal to go spillin' off into space like a li'l' robin when he nes' break!"

"Not for the South Pole, Antarcitics, and the whole world, Zar!" I said with a fervency that made the woman suddenly regard me with a new interest. There was a rustle behind her, and Edith Gale stepped out on deck. "Here is Miss Gale to speak for herself," I added, with some confusion.

"What's the matter, Zar? What do you want of Mr. Chase?"

"I want him to put we 'uns ashoah," began the old woman. "I tol' him we done foun' out about gwine to de Souf Pole, an' dat you an' me wan' to get off right heah, an' go ashoah."

"But I don't want to get off, Zar. I've known all along where we are going. I *want* to go to the South Pole with—with Papa, and we're going to bring it back with us."

Zar regarded her mistress a moment in silence. Then she said in a voice of grave wonderment:

"I wish you tell me what dat Paw of yours gwine to do wid dat Souf Pole when he gits it? Ain' he got money 'nuff already? Anyhow, who gwine to buy dat pole? An' how dey gwine know hit's de sho nuff Souf Pole when dey sees hit? What's to hender us gwine 'shoah right heah, an' hackin' down any ole pole, an' gwine home again

widout any moah foolishness? Ain' none dem folks up in New York gwine know de diff'ence!"

"Why, Zar," laughed Miss Gale, "and you such a good church member!"

"Well, den, if yo' Paw boun' to go aftah de sho' nuff pole, let him go, but don' *you* go. You cain't he'p him any!"

"But, Zar, you know I wouldn't leave Papa. I never could."

The old woman tossed her head.

"Humph! Bettah not be too suah!" She regarded me with a fierceness that somehow warmed me to the soul. "Dey ain' no man livin' I'd go to de Souf Pole foh," she concluded, and with this final shot she disappeared, and went rumbling down the companion-way, "no, sah, not even if I could be wid him all de way an' back again."

"See, there's a vessel," said Edith Gale. "Bring the glass, please, and let's try to make her out."

I hastened to obey, though with no great interest in the result. The tropics and distant vessels had been wonderfully fascinating to me, but just at this moment I was dwelling fondly on Zar's parting salute.

A little later she sought me again.

"Look heah," she counselled solemnly, "you turn dis ship right 'round, now, an' go back home. You go off down dar wid my Miss Edith, an' bofe

die an' get all froze stiff, an' den what good is you to each other, I like to know? What good is you?"

Zar had meant this for remonstrance and admonition, but I was her sworn friend and champion from that moment.

Chauncey Gale found me staring off at the horizon and building a fair castle in which the South Pole had no part.

"Chase," he said. "don't you make a mistake, too, and forget what I told you about Johnnie."

The abruptness of it startled me a bit, but there was a quality in his voice that called for confidence and sincerity.

"Thank you, Mr. Gale, and—and I believe you spoke just in time."

"I had my suspicions of it," he admitted. "Tony got his medicine last night, I guess."

"Oh!" I had started a bit, and Zar's report of Miss Gale's depression took on a new meaning.

"Yes, he's no good this morning. He got all tangled up on his dynamo and we had an explosion that nearly set the ship afire. Then he went off half crying and I haven't seen him since. I guess he wishes himself ashore, now, but wishin' won't do any good. He might get a message there all right, but he's got to have something more than vibrations to get himself there. You see this ain't any matrimonial excursion. We ain't got any

preacher along, and Biff's license don't cover that sort of a splice. Emory's got a doctor's diploma, but that wouldn't fit the case, either."

Mr. Emory was the Second Officer of the Billow-crest—a quiet, unobtrusive man whose love for the sea had led him back to it through devious ways. A runaway cabin boy, he had returned home in early manhood to become a country doctor, a naval hospital surgeon, a ship's doctor and officer by turns, and was now serving us in the double capacity of the last two.

"Anyway," concluded Gale, "we've got the South Pole on hand, and I'm in favor of taking things in their turn. You can't afford to get in Macarony's fix just now. We'll need you when we get down there below the Horn. Besides we're a long ways from shore, and the water here's full of sharks."

The last was certainly true. A black knife-like fin at that instant cut the water below us, and the swish of a steel-like tail as it disappeared made me shudder.

"That chap seems to be following us," commented Gale, "they say it means a death aboard, but I think it's more likely he's after the garbage. 'Twouldn't be a good time to swim, would it?"

He walked away and left me leaning over the rail. I thought his advice kindly, on the whole en-

couraging, and made up my mind to remember it. I wondered if Ferratoni had really spoken to Edith Gale. "Poor fellow," I thought, "it must have been the glamour of the tropic night that made his ideal seem real to him for the moment." And this I still believe to have been the case; but what it was he said that night to Edith Gale, or just what she replied, I shall never know.

X.

CAPTAIN BIFFER IS ASSISTED BY THE PAMPEIRO.

SOUTHWARD, and still southward.

We crossed the equator under light steam, for there was no wind and it was too warm to lie becalmed, even in that mystical, lotus-breathing sea.

Our world was turned around, now. We were going back to the year's beginning, and springtime lay at the end of our bowsprit. The Big Dipper and the North Star were ours no longer; the Southern Cross had become our beacon and our hope. The sun and moon were still with us, but even these had fallen behind and it was to the northward now that we turned for noonday.

Gradually the glorious sunsets of the lower tropics faded into a semblance of those we had known in our own land. It was no longer quite comfortable on deck without wraps. An April quality had come into the air, and we grew presently to realize that we were entering rapidly into what was, to us, the curious anomaly of an October spring.

To me it was all pure enjoyment. It seemed that I could never look at the sea enough, and often I got Edith Gale to help me. And Ferratoni too, sometimes, for with the cooler weather and more temperate skies he had become quite himself again.

The first frost in the air seemed a glacial feeling to us, and set us to talking with renewed interest of the Far South and the lands and peoples we had undertaken to discover. I felt sure we were extravagant in some of our expectations. The tales we had read led us to hope for marvels in the way of mechanical progress, and we treated ourselves to flying machines and heaven only knows what other luxuries. In the end, I discouraged flying machines. I said that if these were a fact with the Antarcticans, they would have come to us long since. I said also that we must not build our anticipations too big, but base everything on calm reason and sound logic. It was more than possible, I admitted, that the Antarcticans had made some advancements in mechanism that were unknown to us, but on the whole I thought we would hold our own at the next world's exhibition.

It had been Chauncey Gale's intention to touch at one of the large South American ports for a little holiday, and to procure a few articles needed in the construction department below stairs. This idea, however, was now discouraged by the officers, who

believed that a number if not all of the crew would desert the ship at the first opportunity.

"Why not let them go?" I had asked, when we were talking the matter over, "and ship a new crew?"

Into the Captain's off eye there came the twist of indifferent scorn usually accorded to my suggestions.

"Yes," he growled, "and get a gang from some crimp who would load 'em onto us dead drunk, to cut our throats as soon as they got sober. I know South American crews—I've helped kill some of 'em—I don't want any more."

I was silent. I didn't know what a crimp was, and I wouldn't have asked for considerable. I have since learned that he is an unreliable person; a bad man, who sells worse whisky over a disreputable bar, from which he unloads on sea-captains anything human, and drunk enough to stand the operation. His place is a sort of clearing house, and the crimp has a syndicate or trust, as it were, with the captain at his mercy.

We altered our plans, therefore, and turned our course more directly southward, toward the Falkland Islands. We were off the River de la Plata at the time, sailing leisurely along under a blue sky, with the fair weather that had followed us most of the way from New York. The sailors had ex-

pected we would put into Rio Janeiro or one of the ports farther down, but now that we had passed below Montevideo and were standing out to sea, they knew we were not to touch land again.

I was leaning over the rail after the interview in the cabin, puzzling about crimps, and looking at the shark—or one just like him—who still followed us, when I heard Mr. Emory, who was on watch, order the men up into the shrouds to shorten sail. I did not see why this should be done, for the sky was blue, dotted here and there with small woolly clouds that showed only a tendency to skurry about a little, like frisking lambs. Perhaps the men didn't understand, either, for the bosen, Frenchy, blew his whistle presently and they left their work about half finished, and came down. Then they gathered in a group at the bow and I saw Mr. Emory go forward and talk earnestly to Frenchy, who seemed excited and gesticulated at the men, the cabin, himself and the world in general. Mr. Emory left him after a few moments and disappeared into the cabin, where I knew the Captain and Edith Gale were matched in a rubber of whist against the Admiral and Ferratoni, who had been coerced into learning the game.

I left my place at the ship's side. I did not believe in the old shark superstition, and I had little respect for a creature that would follow a ship

thirty-five hundred miles for table-scrap when he could get a fish dinner any time for the trouble of catching it. I did want to know about the men, though—why they had been taking in sail, and why they had quit and gathered in a group over the fore-castle. Mr. Emory was talking to Captain Biffer when I came in.

“They refuse to obey orders,” he was saying, “unless we turn around and put into Montevideo. They claim they need more clothing for the cold weather south. The sky looks rather queer, and I set them to reefing down so’s to be ready for one of those Pampeiros that Mr. Larkins says come up in a minute down here. When they got about half through, Frenchy stopped them. They’re out forward, now.”

“Did you tell them we had plenty of warm clothing aboard?” asked Gale.

“I told them. It isn’t the clothing. They simply want to desert the ship.”

“Is Mr. Larkins on the bridge?” asked Captain Biffer.

“He comes on at eight bells—in about five minutes, now.”

“Very well; go back to the bridge, Mr. Emory. I’ll deal with this situation.” Then to Edith Gale “Don’t be alarmed, ma’am.”

I risked a remark.

"Is this your first strike, Captain?" I ventured. His eye fixed me grimly.

"We don't call it that at sea," he said, "we call it mutiny!"

The word rather startled me, but I followed him out on deck, as did the others. No one could remain in the cabin with a thing like that going on outside. The men were about as we had left them—the bosen, Frenchy, somewhat in front of the others. He was a villain and a traitor, but he was not without bravado.

"We haf not been well treat!" he began, "we haf been deceive. We——"

He paused. The Captain had drawn a bead on him with the eye he most frequently used on me. With the other he took aim at the group behind, and every man of them felt himself singled out, and quailed. I could see them beginning to shrink and wither even before he said a word. He began by gently reminding them of the usual lightness of their employment and the continued excellence of their bill-of-fare; then in good sooth he opened up.

It was like the breaking loose at Manila. I had known that Biffer had a way with his English, but I never realized until that moment what he could do when he tried. They didn't need any warm clothes, now. Everything he called them was red-hot and fitted as if they had grown to it. Why,

they fairly shrivelled, and whenever anything he said hit the deck it smoked.

A cloud of what appeared to be genuine smoke came drifting across our bows just then, and the air had grown strangely hot, but nobody seemed to notice it. I think we unconsciously attributed these things to the Captain's artillery. The men were huddled and Frenchy alone was still defiant. His case was desperate and he was a desperate man. He made a step forward—perhaps he thought the men would follow him—a movement that a second later would have been a spring at the Captain's throat. One hand he held close to his side and in it something gleamed.

There was an instant of dead silence, then—just above our heads—

“All hands aloft to shorten sail! The Pampeiro!”

Everybody looked up. Officer Larkins had come on the bridge and his rich voice rang out like a clarion peal. Frenchy stopped. The men sprang into life. They were ready enough to obey, now, but it was too late!

I had seen cyclones in the West, but the Pampeiro is different. From the smoke across our bow there came a lurid flash, and thunder that seemed to hit every part of the vessel at once. I heard the smashing of wood and ripping of canvas overhead, and



“Then, somebody was clinging to me.”—Page 93.

just in front of me I saw a great wave come pouring over the ship's side. Somebody seized my hand and there was a startled cry of my name. Then somebody was clinging to me—somebody that I was holding close and helping into the cabin. In the half blackness I saw that Chauncey Gale and Ferratoni were just behind. The cabin was dark and the ship pitching violently.

It was all over in ten minutes. The vessel still rolled, but the storm had passed. Zar, who had been napping when the Pampeiro struck, came running in to her mistress.

“You po' li'l' lam', how wet you is!” she said, “an' how yo' heart beat—so frightened!”

She bore off her charge, and the rest of us took account of stock.

We found we had lost some sail—a top-mast—several steamer chairs, and one man—Frenchy—who had been directly in the path of the wave.

“That's what that shark meant,” said Chauncey Gale solemnly, “he won't follow us any more. And say, Biff, it was worth the price of admission to hear you comb those fellows down. By the great corner-stone, but you did it beautiful!”

On the whole there were compensations. We had seen a Pampeiro, for one thing, and we had got rid of a mutiny; a disturbing element had been removed and an old superstition had been con-

firmed. Altogether, everybody was satisfied, including the shark.

But to me had come an added joy. In the moment of danger it was to *me* that Edith Gale had turned.

That night we walked the deck together. The sky was clear and black again, though the sea was still billowy, and there was a chill head-wind which, with our damaged rigging, necessitated the use of steam.

We walked back to the stern, and leaning over looked down at the surge boiling up from the screw beneath. Like a huge serpent it twisted away into the night, showing a white coil here and there as it vanished in the shoreless dark behind. A mighty awe came upon us. Face to face with the vastness of the universe, we were overpowered by that dread loneliness which lies between the stars.

By and by I told her of the man sailing around the world in a little boat, alone. She would not let me dwell upon it. Then I said I had thought of doing it myself.

"You must never do it," she shuddered, "promise me that you never will."

There had never been the slightest danger of my doing it, and never would be, but it did not seem strange that I should promise.

XI.

IN GLOOMY SEAS.

IN entering the waters below Cape Horn it had been my plan to continue southward not farther than the northern extremity of the South Shetland Islands, thence to bear off in a southwesterly course until the outer edge of the field—or pack-ice—had been reached. This ice fringe would, I believed, begin somewhat north of the Antarctic Circle, not lower than the sixty-fifth parallel—possibly much higher. It would recede before the warm sun of December—the month answering to our northern June. My continued purpose was to creep westward along the edge of the ice-pack, examining every foot of the way, in the hope of finding a warm northerly flowing current, of the sort that Borchgrevink had reported. Such a current would afford a possible entrance to the frozen expanses surrounding the Antarctic Continent—perhaps guide us to the very gateway of the continent itself. Failing to find a passage sooner, we would continue westward

to the coast of Victoria Land, and endeavor to reach our destination by following the warm current already reported by Borchgrevink.

I was rather surprised at Captain Biffer's hearty approval of this outline. I believe now he was of the opinion that a few weeks along the edge of the pack, with perhaps a little squeeze here and there, would satisfy Chauncey Gale's ambition for Antarctic conquest, and that the *Billowcrest* would be ordered north for a cruise in the Pacific, in the direction of more friendly latitudes.

For the present, therefore, we continued directly southward—very slowly, for we were still full early—keeping well off the stormy coast of Patagonia, and to the eastward of the Falkland Islands. These we sighted one morning, and ran close in to get a glimpse of inhabited land once more before plunging into the vastness of unknown and unpeopled seas. It was a bleak shore, and perhaps reminded Mr. Larkins of his native Newfoundland, where the conditions were somewhat similar. He gazed solemnly at the forbidding coast along which there showed but meager signs of foliage.

"Thim's nootmig threes," he said, at last, waving at the stunted vegetation which we were inspecting through the glasses, and upon which we had been commenting.

Edith Gale protested,

"Oh, Mr Larkins! Nutmeg trees don't grow in this cold latitude!"

"Yis, ma'am,—wooden nootmigs. The people ship 'em to the shtates."

"And that long, smooth rock running down; what's that, Mr. Larkins?"

"That's a seals' shlidy-down. The seals, ma'am, get out there and shoot the shoots. Many's the time I've watched them in Newfoundland. I shouldn't wonder if the bake-apple grows over there, too," he added, reflectively.

"Baked apple! Do apples grow already baked in Newfoundland, Mr. Larkins?"

"Not baked apple, but bake-apple, ma'am. A bit of a foine yellow berry that grows on the top of a shlip of a shtalk, so high"—(holding his hand down to within a foot of the deck)—"one berry to the shtalk, ma'am, and delishuous, my worrd! And the bake-apple jam!" Mr Larkins closed his eyes and wagged his head in a manner to indicate that life without bake-apple jam was but a poor shift, at best. "The *bake-apple*, is it!" he continued. "Oh, but, Miss, you must never die without tasting the bake-apple!"

There was something about Mr. Larkins's manner that compelled faith in this unknown fruit, which ordinarily we would have regarded as a pleasant myth of his own. We caught a measure

of his enthusiasm. We wanted to see the mysterious golden berry that grew one on a stalk, and had we not been on our way to find the South Pole, I believe we might have gone in pursuit of the bake-apple.

And now we were indeed getting well to the southward. The sun though on its upward incline had fallen far behind. Our days became long spectral cycles broken only by brief periods of luminous twilight, and the glacial feeling in the air was no longer a quality of our imagination. Against the chill wind that came over our bow we tacked but leisurely. Gradually, as we should, we were acquiring the taste for Antarctic cold, and daily the fascination of it, and of the lonely seas around and about, grew upon us.

XII.

WHERE CAPTAIN BIFFER REVISES SOME OPINIONS.

I WENT up on the bridge one morning to find Captain Biffer gazing intently through the glass at some distant object.

"There's your South Shetlands," he announced, as I approached. "Elephant Island, I should say. Looks pretty cold to me."

I did not reply for a moment, but stood looking out over the black tossing waters that lie below Cape Horn. Somewhere it was, in this cold expanse, that my uncle's vessel was believed to have gone down. Here, amid the crash of storm and surge, she had been last seen, more than twenty years before, and here must have perished: I swept the sea in every direction, as if seeking to locate the very spot.

"They used to come to the Shetlands after seal," continued the Captain, "and they say there's gold and precious stones on some of 'em. I never saw anybody that got any, though. Too cold, I guess, to look and dig for 'em."

"Colder than the Klondike?"

"Klondike! Well, I should say so. There's a warm current runs up that way. I never heard of any warm currents down here except the one you're going to find. Just take a glance at that for a cold-looking country."

I leveled the glass and scrutinized the blue outline ahead. It was a flat-topped, square formation, and there was a peculiar prismatic glow about it that suggested ice. I hesitated for some moments, however, before risking a reply. At last I was convinced.

"Yes, Captain Biffer," I said, lowering the glass, "it is pretty cold—it's an iceberg!"

Edith and Chauncey Gale, followed by Ferratoni, came up the stairs just in time to hear the Captain's reply.

"An iceberg!" he jeered. "Well, I've seen a good many icebergs up north, but I never saw one like that. You mean an ice-box."

I was quite calm. I could afford to be, for I felt that a moment of triumph was at hand.

"Yes, Captain," I admitted, "you might liken it to that, I suppose, but it is an iceberg, nevertheless. The Arctic bergs which you have seen were split from glaciers and topped by tall pinnacles and turrets. They were more like castles or cathedrals. The Antarctic berg is usually a section of that great

ice wall or barrier which we hope some day to reach. It is nearly always of this general character, and is frequently crossed by blue horizontal lines, showing its stratified formation from year to year."

Before I had finished speaking the Captain was again studying the object ahead. A light mist had drifted across our bows, but it lifted now, and the square fortress-like walls in the distance shone clearly in the morning sun. Captain Biffer waited a moment longer. Then he came down handsomely.

"You're right!" he said heartily, "I can see those lines from here. I know the Arctics," he added, "but I guess I'm all at sea in these God-forsaken waters!"

It was a slight incident—an opportune display of a bit of knowledge which any boy familiar with Antarctic literature might have possessed—but my command of the expedition may be said to have dated from that moment. The next day fairly completed my triumph. Some large fragments of surface ice had come drifting to the ship and we were looking at them, over the side.

"Pancake ice," commented the Captain. "We'll get all we want of that, pretty soon."

"Not exactly pancake ice, Captain," I observed respectfully. "A combination of salt-water pancake

with splinters of fresh-water, barrier ice. Those clear spots are the fresh-water formation."

Captain Biffer regarded me a moment doubtfully. Then he gave an order to some sailors.

"Get up a piece of that ice!" he growled, "I want to look at it."

A man was lowered over the side, and hacked off a fragment which was hauled on board. The Captain chipped out pieces of the white and the clear ice and tasted of them. Then he flung them overboard.

"You win!" he laughed, "I'm out of it, down here."

"What's that brown color on it?" asked Edith Gale.

"Dirt," said the Captain. "Comes from the shore."

"Captain," I objected, "I'm sorry, but I've got to differ with you again."

"What is it, then, if it ain't dirt?" he grumbled.

"A growth," I replied, "a plant—at least, I think it is. I can't be sure, for I have never seen it before, but former explorers have reported an algæ as giving such an appearance to old ice, and I think I can show that this is what they found."

I ran down to my stateroom, and presently returned with a powerful microscope—a treasure from boyhood. I placed it upon a small table and

putting a bit of the brown color on a slide adjusted the lenses. Then I beckoned to the Captain. He came and squinted into the glass steadily for a moment.

"Humph! seaweed!" he commented. "Well, I'll be—— Say, look here, this is your ocean, and your expedition—you can have 'em!"

You see, it was my innings. Theoretically I knew more of this part of the world than any one on board, and theory was about all we had now to go on. I could see that Chauncey Gale was pleased. I suppose it had not always been easy to stand for me against the Captain's poor opinion, and he felt that in some measure now he had been justified. Edith Gale, too, was not made less happy by these incidents, and the sailors, taking their cue from their chief officer, paid me an added and daily increasing respect. True, the Captain continued to navigate the ship, but in a general way I directed our course and experiments, and was regarded more and more as authority in matters of discussion and dispute.

High up on the mainmast I had constructed for me a crow's nest, or lookout, from which to make observations. Chauncey Gale attended to this, and did it well, as he did everything he undertook. It was a stout, comfortable barrel arrangement, capable of holding three persons if necessary.

When it was done I viewed it from below with interest and misgivings. I had never been aloft, and I felt that an error in reaching my perch might conclude the expedition. The eyes of the ship were upon me, however, and it would not do to hesitate.

With a faint but resolute heart, I began the ascent. I did not dare to look back, and when at last I found myself safely inside the snug box, I was a bit weak and trembly, but swelling with triumph.

"Let me in, too, please!"

I looked down at my feet. It was Edith Gale, who had run lightly up behind me. I concealed any pride I may have had in my own accomplishment and drew her up.

"How pale you are," she said, "are you ill?"

"No, oh no, it's the—the excitement, I think."

We leaned over and waved to those below. They waved back at us and cheered.

"How's the weather up there?" called Gale.

"Cold," I said. "Feels like the North Pole!" (It was, in fact, about zero at the time, but we did not mind it in the least.)

"What's the matter with the South Pole?" This from Captain Biffer.

"Hot, there!" I yelled.

The Captain laughed.

"Well," he shouted. "you're right about some

things, but you'll find that barrel a parlor stove compared with the South Pole."

Edith Gale leveled a glass toward the southern horizon. We were well down in the sixties, now. Icebergs and floating pack-ice had become common. To the southward lay mystery that in some weird form might at any moment rise above the somber waters. Presently she handed me the glass.

"See if you make out anything," she said.

I looked steadily, and at first saw nothing. Then, low down, and stretching from rim to rim across our watery world, far-off and faint, rising, falling, lifting and disappearing, I saw a thin, uncertain, glittering edge—the ice-pack!

It was our turn, now, to cheer. Captain Biffer ran up to see and verify. By nightfall (the radiant dusk fell late now, for it was November, and the sun shone till ten o'clock) we were in the midst of loose, grinding ice—the edge of the pack.

The second stage of the Great Billowcrest Expedition had begun.

XIII.

IN THE "FIGHTING-TOP."

OUR crow's nest became at once the nucleus of the expedition. Edith Gale named it our "fighting-top" because of the fierce discussions that took place there.

This warfare concerning the new objects that appeared daily on our horizon was almost continual, and when not actively engaged in the combats, I was supposed to adjust them. They occurred most frequently between Edith Gale and her father, both of whom delighted in our lookout, and remained with me there a greater part of the time, in spite of bitter cold, and even the wet freezing discomfort that often swept in about us.

A paragraph of Borchgrevink's came back to me now—the fulness of which I had not before realized. "Only from the crow's nest," he says, "can one fully appreciate the supernatural charm of Antarctic scenery. Up there you seem lifted above the pettiness and troubles of everyday life. Your horizon is wide, and from your high position you rule the little world below you. Onward, onward stretch the ice-fields, the narrow channels about the

ship are opened and closed again by the current and wind, and as you strain your sight to the utmost to find the best places for the vessel to penetrate, your eyes wander from the ship's bow out toward the horizon, where floes and channels seem to form one dense vast ice-field. Ice and snow cover spars and ropes, and everywhere are perfect peace and silence."

I have quoted this because we felt it all, and he has given it to us so much better than I could say it. No ordinary attempt of the elements could dismay us, or chill the exalted joy of our high, swinging perch. From our fighting-top we looked away to the south, across leagues of lifting, shifting, grinding ice—split here and there by long, black waterways—studded by iridescent island bergs—garish with every splendor of the spectrum, and blending at last into that overwhelming fathomless hue of the South, Antarctic Violet.

New wonders were constantly appearing before and below us. From our lofty vantage we discussed them fully, and photographed them when they came within range. With the luminous icy mist about us, there was still a gratification and a rapture, and when it passed and the sun returned, a new blazing enchantment lay all below us, even to the northward, where, beyond the dazzle of drifting ice-pans, rolled the black, uplifting sea.

We observed and studied the haze or "blink" in the sky that always indicates the presence of ice, and the black, or "water" sky that tells of an open way—keeping well in among the floes, that we might not miss any lead or northward drift that would reveal our current from the South.

I did not expect it for a long distance yet, but it was our plan to leave no step of the way unexamined, and certainly there was plenty beside to repay us. Edith Gale seemed fairly lost in the color glories of this supernatural, elemental world. Chauncey Gale declared it was like the Chicago Fair, where one could have spent a lifetime and still not have seen it all. He made his initial attempt at naming birds one morning when a penguin, the first we had seen, came by on a small pan of ice. The bird regarded us solemnly, and in return we laughed at him. Edith Gale was overjoyed at his arrival.

"Now, Daddy, what's that? You were going to name things, you know."

"That," replied Gale gravely, "is a 'Billy Watson.' He looks exactly like a fellow I used to know by that name, when he had his dress suit on."

We didn't consider it much of a name, but it had a sticking quality, and all penguins became "Billy Watsons" to us thereafter. There were "Big Bil-

ly Watsons" and "Little Billy Watsons." Also, some that had feathers in their hats, and these we called "Dandy Billy Watsons." When we came to some sea-leopards and crab-eating seals he tried his hand again as a naturalist.



TWO IMPRESSIONS OF BILLY WATSON. FIRST, BY CHAUNCEY GALE. SECOND, BY NICHOLAS CHASE.

"Those," he said, "are 'Moon-faced Mollies.'"

But this was regarded as a failure. Anyhow, it was my turn. The Captain had referred to them indiscriminately as seals, whereupon I produced their true names and my authority for conferring them, thus adding another instalment to Mr. Biffer's respect for my scientific attainments, which, though slight enough, were sufficient to impress him considerably.

During these days Ferratoni had almost nothing to say. He walked the deck for hours as we pushed through the drifting ice, listening to its crushing

under the iron sheathing below and looking always to the south, as if something lay there from which, across that wireless, frozen waste, to him alone came tidings. Now and then he ascended to our fighting-top to peer still farther into those polar depths. We all felt very close to creation's secrets here in this primeval world, but we realized that Ferratoni was nearer to the invisible than the others.

"I feel sometimes that he can read our very souls and all the mystery of the air," Edith Gale said to me, after one of these visits. "When he looks at me I know that I may as well have put my thoughts into words. He believes, too, you know, that we shall be able to converse mentally, by and by, and at any distance. It would be simply the chording of the thought vibration, he says, and that there is really no need of words—that they are but a poor medium at best, and, as somebody has said, invented more to conceal thought than to convey it."

"We shall have wordless telepathy, then, instead of wireless telegraphy," I assented, "and I believe Ferratoni is nearer right than most people would admit. Why, when we are up here alone together, sometimes, it seems to me that we——" I hesitated, and she interrupted me rather hastily.

"Yes, when we are looking out at all this, we are so often silent because there are no words to convey

it; but I know what you are thinking better than if you tried to tell it."

I do not think this was quite what I had started to say, but I was grateful for the interruption. I should doubtless have got into deep water and difficulties.

Each day the sun rose earlier, shone warmer, and set later. What we referred to as night no longer bore even the semblance of a night, and its darkest hour was but a brief period of lambent twilight. The weather continued unusually good for the latitude, and Thanksgiving Day, on the edge of the Antarctic Zone, was a complete golden cycle. After a bounteous dinner planned by Mr. Sturritt, and joined in by all the officers of the *Billowcrest*, we ascended by turns to the fighting-top to look for the first time on the midnight sun. Captain Biffer came back to the deck rather solemnly.

"It's more than likely we won't see it again, right away," he announced. "If I'm not mistaken, there's a blow coming off there to the north-east."

The Captain was *not* mistaken, this time. Within an hour after midnight we were pitching in the midst of real darkness, fearsome and impenetrable. Icy waves were breaking over the decks of the *Billowcrest*, and the crash of ice under her hull was terrifying in its deafening fury.

There was no sail to take in, for we were running under steam only, now, but the sailors had enough to do at first to keep everything movable from washing overboard, and then, a little later, themselves. At each end of the vessel the officers were roaring out commands, and the men striving to obey.

There was no thought of sleep, of course, and everybody was on deck or in the cabins. Zar was praying swiftly and inclusively so as to have everybody in readiness at a moment's notice, and nobody discouraged this undertaking. From stray bits that came to me now and then above the uproar I gathered that she believed our Thanksgiving services, as well as the expedition generally, had been of a character to provoke Divine wrath.

"Oh, Lawd," she howled, "what can dese po' sinful people expect, a-goin' a hop-scotchin' aroun' on Thanksgivin' Day, an' a-huntin' foh a fool pole in a lan' wheah dey ain' nuffin but ice, an' wheah de sun shine at midnight? What can dey spect, Lawd? What can dey spect?"

As a matter of fact we were expecting almost anything at that moment, and we were not surprised, or more frightened than we had been, when Captain Biffer came in and roared at us that we were being driven into the pack!

"Let her go in!" yelled Gale.

"Be smashed, if we do. Go to hell in five minutes!"

"Don't care! hell can't be worse than this!"

In the electric blaze of the cabin I looked more closely at Gale. There was a green pallor over his features that was not due to fright. Even in that awful hour there came upon me a proper and malicious joy. He was seasick! I did not blame him. We were rolling fearfully and I felt some discomfort, myself. But the spirit of my ancestors had waxed strong now, and prevailed. The others, too, were getting pale, all except Zar, who turned a peculiar blue, and discontinued her prayer service. The brawny stewardess and myself assisted both her and her mistress to their staterooms, where I spoke a reassuring word to Edith Gale, and hastened back to the others. But Gale and Ferratoni had both disappeared, and I saw them no more during that fearful night.

Plunging and battering we jammed our way into that mass of thundering ice. Our search-lights, of which we had two, were kept going constantly, but even so, we were likely at any moment to collide with a berg in that surging blackness. The sight from the deck—the shouting sea, with the ice tossing and flashing as it was borne into the angle of our electric rays—was as the view of a riotous in-

ferno that was making ready to crush us into its sombre depths.

But by morning we had penetrated the pack to a point where the violence beneath produced on the surface only a heaving, groaning protest at our presence. With the return of light, I went out to view our condition, and when I realized that our invincible Billowcrest had battled unhurt through it all, that noble vessel—whatever may have been her faults, and in spite of all disparagement—took a place in my affections that was only outranked by those of her builder and her mistress. The wind slackened in the afternoon, and with the calm there came clear, intense cold. By morning the great ice-floes about us were cemented together. We were frozen solidly in the pack.

XIV.

AN EXCURSION AND AN EXPERIMENT.

"WELL, here we are," announced Captain Biffer, as we grouped together on the deck to survey the scene. "And here we're likely to stay for one while, I'm thinking. This is your warm world—how do you like it?"

"Better than a cold sea," I said, "when there's a northeast gale blowing."

"How long do we lay up here, Chase?" asked Chauncey Gale. "You're running this excursion."

I was secretly uneasy, but I made light of the situation.

"Oh, this is the usual thing. We'll be here a day or two, perhaps, then the ice will separate again, or a lead form that will let us back to open water. We could hardly be shut in long at this season."

"I'd invent something to beat this game if I was going to play it regular," said Gale, then added, "Great place this to lay out an addition. 'Frozen-hurst.' how's that for a name?"

"Can we go out on the ice?" asked Edith Gale.

"Of course, if we are careful, and do not go far from the ship," I said. "We can try our new snow-shoes."

"I shall make the first Antarctic experiment in wireless communication," observed Ferratoni.

"Good time to look for the bake-apple," suggested Mr. Larkins.

But just here came a sharp protest from Zar.

"Yas, I sh'd say *baked apples!* Well, I reckon we jes' 'bout as apt to fin' baked apples as anything else in dis refrigidous country! Not much, my Miss Edith ain' gwine out on dat ol' humpety, bow-back ice-pon'! No, sah!"

Zar's characterization of the sea's aspect referred to the huge hummocks and heaved appearance of the ice in places. There were also many bergs, apparently at no great distance, and in spite of the old woman's strenuous objections, Edith Gale and I planned to visit the nearest of these.

We did so in the afternoon. Numberless penguins, sea-leopards and other species of Antarctic life had gathered curiously about the Billowcrest during the day, and some of these waddled and floundered after us when we set out. We could not make very rapid progress with our new foot-gear, and for a little distance made an interesting spectacle, with our procession of followers trailing out behind.



“From our high vantage we could command a vast circle of sunless,
melancholy cold.”—Page 117.

"All hands and the cook" gathered on the deck to enjoy it.

We carried one of Ferratoni's telephones—a neat, compact little affair, with handles for convenience, and from nearly a mile distant communicated with the inventor, who had ascended to the crow's-nest for the experiment. It was a successful trial, and we believed it would have been equally so had the distance been much greater.

Then we pushed in among the silent bergs, and ascending by a circuitous path to the battlements of a great ice fortress, tried it again.

"Hello," I called, "can you hear a message from the South Pole?"

The answer that came back was as prompt as it was unexpected.

"There is a message in the air," said the voice of Ferratoni. "It is very close—around and about us. Some day—perhaps soon—I shall hear it."

I repeated this to Edith Gale, wonderingly.

"What do you suppose he means?" I whispered.

"You remember what I told you in the fighting-top," she said. "I am sure of it now."

I did not answer, but together our eyes followed the white way to the south.

A light snow had fallen during the forenoon, and dull clouds were banked heavily against the sky. From our high vantage we could command

a vast circle of sunless, melancholy cold. Beyond this there lay another horizon, and beyond that still another, and yet another. In this deep solitude the distant black outline of the Billowcrest marked our only human tie.

A silence and an awe fell upon us—a mysterious fear of this pale land that was not a land, but a chill spectral semblance, with amazing forces and surprising shapes. We descended hastily and set out for the ship without speaking. From among the bergs the creeping gloom gathered and shut us in. Uncanny sea-leopards and mournful penguins regarded us as we hurried past.

We were clumsy on our snow-shoes, but we consumed no unnecessary time in reaching the vessel, and not until we were warmed and cheered by a good dinner were we altogether restored. But then came weariness, and with the Billowcrest now moveless and silent, we realized that night more fully than ever before the perfect blessing of dreamless, Antarctic sleep.

And now passed some days in which I grew ever more uneasy, but maintained as far as possible a cheerful outward calm. The cold lingered, and the way seaward did not open. Huge cracks split the pack here and there, but they did not reach the Billowcrest. Then came that terror of all polar expeditions—the ice pressure—the meeting and closing in

of enormous ice-fields moving irresistibly in opposite directions.

We were awakened rather rudely by a sudden harsh grinding below, and felt the vessel heave, first to one side, then to the other. Then there was an ominous rumble, which became a deafening roar. I hurried on deck, to find that a strong pressure was taking place, and that we were directly in its midst. Our peril was great and imminent. I was turning hastily toward the cabin, when Captain Biffer ran down the deck yelling:

“Take to the ice! Take to the ice! She’s going down!”

At the same instant Chauncey Gale hurried out of the cabin, followed by Edith Gale and the others. The sailors were skurrying about helplessly.

“To the ice!” roared the Captain. “To the ice! She’s going down!”

Most of us scrambled for the rail. If I did not do so it was perhaps because there were others in my way. But Chauncey Gale, his hand on his daughter’s arm, stood firm.

“Stop!” he shouted. “Going down, *nothing!* She’s going up!”

And this was true. Everybody saw it, now it was pointed out to them. Thanks to the shape and strength of her hull, the sturdy Billowcrest was being squeezed and lifted bodily into the air, in-

stead of being crushed like a peanut, as would have been the case with an ordinary vessel.

For ten minutes or more the heaving and grinding continued. Huge pressure ridges formed on every side, and the ice world about us was a living, groaning agony. Then it seemed that there came relief. The pack split and thundered apart in every direction. The Billowcrest settled back into place, and before us lay a long way of open water, stretching northward as far as the eye could reach. Our steam was ready, and in a very brief time we were on our way back to the sea.

"That was about the tightest squeeze I ever got caught in," observed Gale, "and, say, I didn't build her for a nip like that, but didn't the old Billowcrest do noble?"

"Chauncey Gale," I said, "you're the best ship builder, and the bravest man God ever made!"

"How much do you want to borrow?" asked Gale, but he said it without bitterness.

XV.

AS REPORTED BY MY NOTE-BOOK.



WE were more fearless now, we were also more careful. Our faith in the Billowcrest was complete, but we profited by experience. At the next indication of bad weather, we headed northward in time, and rode out the storm at sea.

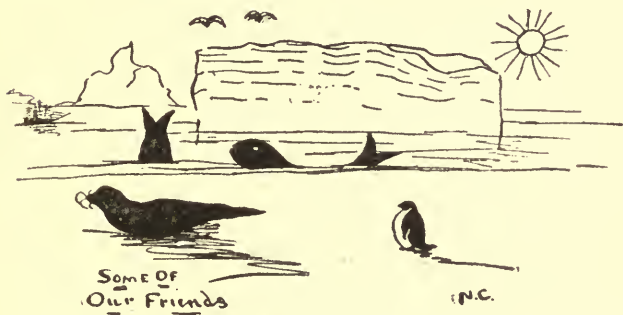
I think Captain Biffer had hoped that we would abandon our project after the ice squeeze, but Christmas Day found us far to the westward, and still creeping slowly along the edge of the ice-fields. Our days were a never-ending glory now, for it was midsummer, and of good weather we were having far more than we had been led to expect. We did not need to go to the crow's-nest to see the midnight sun on Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day we celebrated by crossing the one hundred and fortieth meridian, and by telling, after dinner, where we had been and what had happened to us the year before.

The Gales, with the yacht and its present officers, had been in Naples, where they had met Ferratoni, who was then perfecting his experiments. I had been in the interior of the "States," making ready to drift, I knew not where. Now all were here together, in the luminous, and fantastic midsummer of the farther South, seeking at my direction a half mythical highway to what might be a wholly mythical destination. Edith Gale had referred to me once, in jest, as a new Lochinvar. I said that I would strive to be that, but there were nights when I woke and remembered what all those men of science had said, and just how they had said it; and on those nights I trembled and weakened a little at the thought of the responsibility of life and expenditure I had assumed, and might have faltered still more, perhaps, had I not been strong in my determination to prove those sages of the test-tube and microscope at fault.

Thus far we had found no indication of a warm current, nor, in fact, anything else suggestive of warmth in the latitudes below the Antarctic Circle, but, as the books say, there had been plenty to amuse and instruct. Our days were a good deal alike, but they were never monotonous. As we approached the point where Borchgrevink had penetrated the ice-pack, our expectations increased and our painstaking scrutiny of each step of the way was re-

doubled. Perhaps the brief daily record of my notebook will best continue the narrative at this point.

Jan. 1. Still pushing westward, slightly south. The New Year finds us at latitude $68^{\circ} 12'$, longitude $163^{\circ} 44'$. We are going very slowly now, barely thirty miles a day. The weather is excellent, and seems very warm. I spend fifteen hours out of the twenty-four in the fighting-top. When I am not there we lie to, or drift. There appears to be a slight westward movement in the ice, and we go



FROM MR. CHASE'S NOTE-BOOK.

with it during the night, or rather while I am asleep, for, of course, there is no night yet. Plenty of life here. Several sorts of whales appear in the open water, and penguins visit the ship daily. Edith Gale declares that some of them are the same ones that we first saw, and that they have taken a fancy to us.

Jan. 2. We cannot be far now from Victoria Land, but still no sign of the warm current. True, Borchgrevink pushed thirty-eight days through the pack-ice before he came to this current, but these things vary in different years, and it is more than likely that we are already nearing the point where he emerged from the pack. The slight drift we have noticed continues and appears to bend to the south as we approach the coast.

Jan. 3. Edith and Chauncey Gale were with me almost constantly to-day in the crow's-nest. The sailors to-night claim they can "smell" land. As we approach it, life becomes much more frequent, though not more cheerful. It is either white or black, and unmusical. The chant of the seals is depressing, and the chorus of the penguins a thing to be avoided. However, they always amuse us, and we appear to furnish entertainment for them. Also, they are fond of good music, perhaps because they cannot make it themselves. Edith Gale played the piano last night, and a whole flock of "Billy Watsons" in dress suits crowded on deck to listen to it. Probably they thought it a musicale given for their benefit. The sea-leopards and crab-eaters gathered about the ship, too, and would have come on board if they had been able. Mr. Sturritt is experimenting with all of these from a food stand-

point, and the sailors are collecting many skins and feathers.

Jan. 5. Borchgrevink must have found very different conditions, indeed, from the westward, for



AN IMPRESSION BY CHAUNCEY GALE.

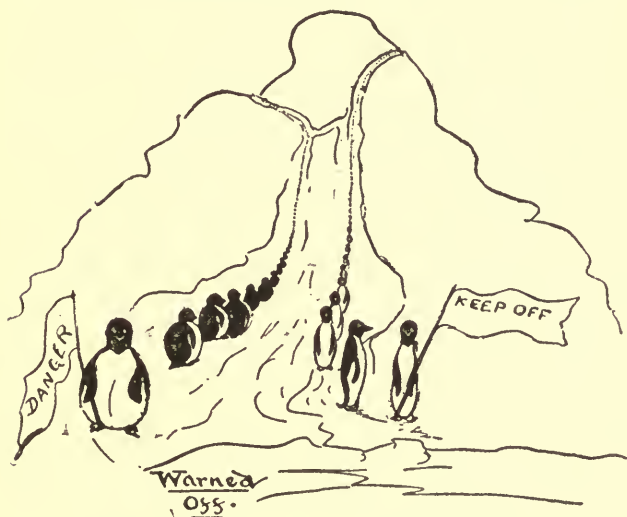
we are at latitude 70° , or very near it, and we have not yet found it necessary to penetrate the ice. This current that now appears to drift us to the southwest may have something to do with it, or it may be

that this is a warmer summer, hence the different conditions.

Jan. 6. This current, if it is a current, puzzles us all. It is not noticeable on the surface, where the ice moves with the wind (I have even fancied to-day when there was no wind that the floes drifted northward), but seems to grip us from beneath and push us slowly, very slowly, but surely, to the southwest. Gale said to-day it was like the illness, "grip." We were sure we had it, but we didn't know just where.

Jan. 8. Whatever this current is, it is carrying us in the right direction. It has brought us safely through the waters explored by Sir James Ross fifty years ago, and where pack-ice delayed Borchgrevink thirty-eight days. The Captain thinks it a slight undercurrent that curves in around Possession Island, which we shall see to-morrow, if all goes well. We are all eager for the first sight of Antarctic land. Again to-day there was no wind, and both Edith Gale and I held that the surface ice was drifting to the north, but the others thought it only *seemed* so because of our movement to the southward. We did not change our opinion, however. It is curious, but we almost invariably agree. It is as if we were two parts of one mind. How beautiful she was to-day in her new seal hood, with the funny little point at the top. I . . .

Jan. 9. We have seen the coast to-day, but did not think it wise to attempt a landing. From the deck we could view with our glasses Possession Island, with its millions of penguin inhabitants. Their lookouts screamed and yelled at us to keep off, and their bleak shore is well defended by jagged



"PROCESSION ISLAND" BY CHAUNCEY GALE.

rocks and long glacier points that push out into the water. We observed the perfect system of order and highways maintained by these solemn creatures as they moved procession-like to and from the shore—the fat ones on one side all proceeding to their

nests in the cliffs, and the thin ones coming to the sea for food. They did not quarrel, or get in each other's way. It seemed that we could never get through laughing at them. Gale says the place should be named Procession Island, and that the first addition he lays out down here he's going to get "Billy Watsons" to build the streets for him. There are many icebergs about, nearly all with the blue lines and the tabular top. They are from the great barrier to the south, whence they have doubtless been blown by the gales of last winter, and now seem to be drifting homeward to be there in time for next.

Jan. 12. Our current has not deserted us, but we are more mystified with it than ever. The surface ice is certainly drifting slowly northward, for we can now gauge its movement by the shore, while we and the bergs are drifting to the south. The Captain says that it is not uncommon for currents to flow in opposite directions, one above the other, for a short distance, and that they are called "witch tides," for the reason that ships are sometimes unable to move in them, even with a fair wind, but that he has never seen anything just like this. Can it be that this upper drift from the south is our warm current, and that we have been in it for days without knowing it? Certainly it is but a feeble current as yet, and there is no warmth in it that we

can discover. There is no pack here, and we shall keep on going. Borchgrevink found open water as low as 74° .

Jan. 13. It is our warm current from the south! There is no doubt of this to-day, and there is more to be told! When I went on deck this morning, Officer Larkins, who was on watch, reported that the ice seemed to run north a bit stronger, and that our drift southward was proportionately less rapid. I immediately had a pail of water drawn up, and tested it. It was 32° . Yesterday it had tested 30° ! There was something about the look of the water that made me taste it. Larkins said he thought it had thrown me into a fit, and I suppose I did make some sort of a demonstration, for it was fresh! At least it was only brackish, from the melting in it of the salt-water ice. I don't remember just what I did at first, but I know that when I turned around and saw Edith Gale coming out of the cabin, I found it not easy to keep from behaving in a manner which I feel quite certain she would have disapproved. As it was, I rushed up to her with the glass. "Taste it!" I urged. "Taste it! It's fresh water from a warm river flowing straight from the South Pole!" She tasted and rejoiced with me. That it came from inland warmth we could not doubt. And now the mystery of these currents becomes clearer. Above the heavily-mov-

ing ocean current below us there is the lighter, shallower current of fresh warm water, carried by its force in the opposite direction, and finally spreading and losing itself in the sea. It was doubtless this strange combination that helped to open our way through the pack, and that we believe now will show us the way to our destination. In celebration of the event we have just had a great feasting, at which I was the guest of honor. I cannot sleep, so I must go back to the deck to watch and rejoice.

Later—Edith Gale was there, and we walked up and down for an hour, constructing wild theories. We still drift southward against our new warm river. The drift of the great salt current a few feet below the surface is strong, and we let it carry us—whither?

Jan. 15. We are in the midst of a fierce, northeasterly storm that has brought a world of grinding pack-ice about us. All trace of our warm current is lost, of course, and we are fighting now with steam and sail to keep from being driven upon the ragged shores of Victoria Land. We cannot see the coast, for a thick mist has shut us in, but we know by the screaming flocks of birds whirling about us that it is not far distant. At any moment we may strike a hidden reef or rock, or be crushed by a toppling berg. No one slept last night, and one of the officers has been in the crow's-nest constantly.

Two days ago all seemed joy. To-night I am heart-sick, and only for the abiding courage and faith of Chauncey and Edith Gale would be despairing. Gale is a king among men, and Edith——

Jan. 20. Five days in the clutch of this fearful storm. I seem to have lived as many years since we found the warm current. If I have slept I do not know it. I am thin and haggard with watching and anxiety. But now the wind has gone down, and there is hope, though we are still beset with this pounding, maddening ice, and the Captain has taken no observation since the 14th. I shall try to sleep.

Jan. 21. The sun came out this morning, and Biffer got our position. There has been little change in the past week. We have just about held our own in keeping off shore. Now we are hemmed in by ice and our currents are lost beneath it. We shall try to push southward, however, in the hope of reaching clear water. The wind is behind us, but the drift ice ahead packs fearfully, perhaps because of the opposite flowing current.

Jan. 26. This morning I was called before I was awake, and hurried on deck to find Captain Biffer looking through a glass at a grim outline ahead.

"There's your ice-wall," he said, as I approached.

"What's our latitude?" I asked.

"72° 33'."

"Then it can't be the wall," I said. "It lies somewhere below 74° ."

The Captain looked again through his glass. Then we ascended to the crow's-nest for a better view.

"Well," he declared, at last, "if that ain't the ice-wall, it's the father of all the icebergs we've seen yet."

And an iceberg it proved to be. We pushed and worked our way toward it all the forenoon, and about two o'clock came near enough to make out an area of open water adjacent to it, by which we knew it was being carried southward against the surface current thus leaving a clear space behind. Into this we pushed a little later, and steaming in close, found that in the back of our ice giant there was a hollow of considerable size. It was, in fact, a sort of harbor for us, though not without its drawbacks. For to the right and left and behind lay pack-ice, so solid that escape in any direction seemed impossible, and ready to close in upon us should the great berg halt or hesitate in its progress poleward.

"We are going now, whether we want to or not," said Chauncey Gale.

"Yes," laughed Captain Biffer, "we've got a pacemaker."

And this is so. Borne on by the vast salt current far beneath, our giant berg, regardless of drift ice

and feeble fresh-water resistance, is pushing slowly steadily to the southward, whence it came. I believe now that this salt undercurrent describes a huge circle in the Antarctic Ocean; that it bends to the eastward when it reaches the great southern barrier, thence northward, detaching and carrying with it into the upper seas these giant sections of the wall, drifting them across westward and bringing them back southward, at last, as this one is being brought, to the point of its titanic birth. The bergs we met over by the Shetlands were drifting northward. Those along the way came as we came. Some of them looked worn and travel-stained, as if they had been swinging around the circle for a long time; bruised and battered for perhaps centuries. The one we are following must be on its first trip, for it is a giant of giants, going home mighty and magnificent after its first trip abroad.

And we are going with it. We shall not attempt to force our way out, and why should we? We set out for the South. We believe now—all of us, I think—that there is a land there from whence can flow a warm river. We are going to find it!

XVI.

FOLLOWING THE PACEMAKER.

FOR a full month we drifted slowly with our monster berg. So slowly that at times, when the wind shifted, we were almost at a standstill, and the drift-ice was ready to shut us in. But within our big giant's lap we were well protected, and lying idly were borne steadily to the south. We grew presently to love our big protector, and had the Captain's name of Pacemaker not clung to him we should have christened him something very grand, indeed. For as a pacemaker he was not a success. An average of twenty miles a day was about the best we could do, and at times we did even worse. Still, we gave him great credit, for without him we might, as Gale said, "have gone to the wall" before we were ready to.

As the days passed I found that I must change my calculations somewhat concerning the position of the barrier. I had located it not lower than 75° ,

but by the 25th we were below 76° , and no barrier as yet. Could it be that this undercurrent flowed *through* the Antarctic Continent? But this, I decided, would be impossible.

We were not idle during this period of drifting, and the month as a whole was one of enjoyment. When we no longer had the sun at midnight, we began preparing for winter. From the skins obtained by the sailors we rigged ourselves out in new suits, according to the best polar authorities. It was not seriously cold as yet, but with the advent of the Antarctic night who could say what cold might come? Gale was fondly referred to as Jumbo when he got properly put together. One day, however, he got down on his back and could not get up again. Then he was christened the "Turtle."

"I've heard of people being as big as a barrel," he said, "but in this outfit I'm as big as a whole cooper-shop."

We were frequently tempted to try scaling our big Pacemaker to make observations ahead. Edith Gale would have gone promptly had her father consented. Ferratoni, too, was eager to make some further experiments, testing his apparatus with the berg as an elevation. With our little steam launch we believed we might be able to find a place where the ascent would not be difficult, and as days passed

and brought still deeper latitudes, the temptation grew even stronger.

We yielded to it, at last, on the second of March, a momentous day in our calendar. Immediately after breakfast that morning we discovered that our pacemaker was moving considerably faster than at any previous time, and that its great right wing was swinging ahead of the left. I argued at once that we had reached a bend in the current, where the outer edge would have the greater speed. It seemed to me that we must be near the barrier by these indications, and that it was now more important than ever that we should know how the land, or, rather the water, lay ahead, that we might decide whether to continue with the berg, or to strike out now on our own account and endeavor to find a way around to the south. Gale was for sending up the balloon, but this would have required two days' preparation, and seemed unnecessary. I was greatly in favor of trying to scale the berg ahead, which plan was finally adopted.

I had thought of going with two sailors only, one to remain with the launch, and one to assist me in the ascent, but when the launch was ready Edith Gale suddenly appeared, panoplied for the undertaking, and finally coaxed and intimidated her father into yielding. It was against his judgment and mine, but she had been confined to the ship so

long, and our old friend ahead had been so steady and faithful, that it seemed there could be no more danger than in scaling a mountain, provided we found an accessible and easy path. This we did without much difficulty, and just outside of the little hollow where the Billowcrest lay. Here the berg appeared to have been washed or gullied out by snow melting from above, which had formed a sort of natural snow-carpeted stairway, similar to that made by a mountain brook in winter. There was also a good landing below, and here we left the sailors with the launch, which we thought was more likely to need them than we. Then we ran and stumbled up the snowy stair like two children.

It was not quite so easy and safe as it looked. At one place I slipped into a narrow crevice and came near breaking my ankle, as well as Ferratoni's telephone apparatus, which I carried. After this we went more carefully. The berg was even higher than it appeared, but we soon reached the top, which we were glad to find comparatively level and firmly crusted over. Here we tried the telephone with great success. Chauncey Gale asked if we could see the South Pole from where we were, and cautioned "Johnnie" to be careful. By going near the brink we could have looked down on the vessel, but this we would not risk.

We now hastened across to the opposite side of

the berg, not more than a third of a mile distant, for the Pacemaker was a long, narrow section of the barrier, and the hollow in which the Billowcrest was lying made it still narrower at this point. There was a light mist rising from the ice that obstructed our vision somewhat, and there was a dazzle, too, that we thought must be the sun shining on the ice-pack ahead. It was not until we were quite near the edge that we realized our mistake.

Then, suddenly we stopped dead still. Out of the mist, the dazzle had crystallized into definite form. It was ice, truly, but not the far-lying level of the pack. Steadily, surely, inevitably, we were being borne forward to a towering, gleaming wall! It loomed far above us, and extended to the east and west as far as our eyes could follow. No need to guess what it was—we knew! We were face to face with the great barrier—the huge, impregnable fortress of the Antarctic world.

For a moment we stood stupefied, spellbound. Then came a realization of doom. The Pacemaker would strike presently, with its irresistible, crushing momentum. The right wing seemed to us even now touching. Rending destruction, perhaps annihilation, must follow.

There was no necessity of discussion. As usual we were of one mind, and were on our way back to the ship quicker than anything Ferratoni could pro-

duce. We even forgot we had the telephone and could warn the others. What we desired most was to get off from that berg before the earthquake.

"This is the way," panted Edith Gale, presently.

"No, this!" I panted back, bending a little to the east.

In our haste and excitement we had grown a bit confused.

"Try both," I breathed.

But at that instant there came a vast trembling under our feet, and the next I was lying upon the snow, while the air about me was being rent by a sound so awful as to batter into my brain the thought that we had struck the Antarctic Continent and split it in two! I was nearly right, only that, when a second later I opened my eyes, I saw that the split was the Pacemaker's, and that I was lying within six inches of its edge. Just across, perhaps ten yards away, lay Edith Gale. More than two hundred feet below was the sea, and at that instant I saw the Billowcrest being lifted up and up by the mightiest, slowest wave that ever sea was heir to. It seemed to me that she would never stop, and I remember thinking dimly that if she kept on coming I could get aboard. Then at last she fell back and the sea swallowed her. Again I could count time, and I was sure she was on her

way to the bottom when she reappeared, swinging and rolling, but apparently undamaged. I saw black figures on her begin to move; then I looked across once more to Edith Gale, who was slowly drifting farther from me. She was sitting upright, half dazed as it seemed. I called across to her.



SKETCH FROM MR. CHASE'S NOTE-BOOK.

She assured me that she was not in the least injured—only a bit shaken up and confused. Then I saw she had been correct in the position of the launch.

“Go to the boat,” I said, “If they are not lost, they can take you to the ship, and then try to get me. I can see the ship from here. It seems safe.”

“Keep away from that edge!” she called back. “And why don’t you use the telephone?”

I had forgotten it entirely. Even as she spoke it began ringing, and holding it to my ear I distinguished the eager "hello" of Chauncey Gale.

"Hello!" I called, "all right up here! How's the ship?"

"Wet, but safe. How's Johnnie?"

"Safe. We were separated when the shake-up came and the berg broke between us. She's on the side where the launch is."

Gale would always be Gale.

"No danger of your fighting then about whose fault it was."

I heard him now give an order to put off two boats for us, at once, in case the launch had been destroyed. I called this across to Edith Gale, who immediately set out for the landing place, after bidding me not to be uneasy, and to be careful about taking cold. She added that I was sure to be taken off, soon, though by what special means she had acquired this information I have yet to learn. She disappeared down the snow stairway, and I was alone.

I could still talk to Gale, however, and I told him just what we had seen before we struck. I said I would go back over there now and take another look. But this he counselled against, as we were still grinding away at the wall, and there would be great danger from crumbling fragments. I real-

ized, now, why the older bergs were battered and so much smaller. Pounding along that wall for a thousand miles or so is not calculated to encourage the growth or improve the appearance of even the best constructed iceberg.

Then Gale told me what had happened on the ship. Officer Larkins and one sailor had been on deck when the upheaval came. They had seized ropes on the upward lift, and though very wet and breathless after the plunge, had come up safely. The water had not been fierce, but very deep. Larkins had interviewed, and named, a few fish while he was down. The Billowcrest had fully earned her title.

"But where were *you*?" I called.

"Playing euchre with Biffer, in the cabin. It was my deal. I shuffled as we went up and dealt as we came down. I had plenty of time to get through and turn trump while we were under. Then Biff said, 'I order you up!' and up we come. 'Guess our Pacemaker's hit the South Pole,' says Biff, 'an' knocked it over!' Then I remembered right away about you an' Johnnie."

A little later he called to me that "Johnnie" had got back safely. When the upheaval came, the launch had been swamped but did not sink because of her air-tight compartments. The men had scrambled to the berg and had the water about

pumped out by the time Miss Gale reached them. I might expect rescue any time, and I'd better walk about to keep warm.

I could do this and talk, too. Edith Gale took the telephone then, and told me in detail all that had happened, and encouraged me in my long waiting. Incidentally I looked about for a way down, but without success. By and by I heard her speaking to some one, but so low that I could not distinguish the words. Then to me, and it seemed that there was a note of anxiety in her voice:

"How wide is the chasm, now?"

I walked over nearer and answered.

"About as it was—perhaps narrower. It seems to be drawing together again."

"Oh, I'm *so* glad!"

"Why, has anything——?"

"Oh, no, don't be frightened! But the men have returned and can't find any place to scale the berg on that side. They are going now with ropes and ladders to get you across the chasm."

I tried to reply, but the first effort was unsuccessful. I could never, even as a boy, walk a beam that was more than ten feet from the ground. The thought of crossing that chasm on anything to which I was not securely tied made me colder than any Antarctic climate.

"Oh," I managed to say at last, "tell them to

bring ropes, plenty of them, and a—a derrick, if they happen to have such a thing.”

Through another cold, wretched hour—warmed and encouraged only by messages from the ship. At last I heard voices, and then there were men with ropes and ladders on the other side of the chasm, which by this time was no more than fifteen feet across. Their ladders they had expected to splice end to end, but as each was long enough to reach, I insisted that they be spliced side by side. They threw me a rope, and one end of this bridge I dragged over and jammed securely into the snow. Then, untying the rope, I fastened it under my arms and threw them the other end; after which I lay down, for I could never have walked, and was hauled ignominiously across.

“Got a pretty cold shake, didn’t you?” said Gale as he welcomed me back to the ship.

And so it was that we reached the great Antarctic barrier, at last. We came around to the westward of old Pacemaker, who in two parts was still grinding along to the eastward. We found open water and a northerly current, which, on examination, we accepted as our warm surface river, and this we followed directly to an anchorage in a small ice-bound bay or bottle, for it seemed more like a tall glass tube with a strip out of the side than anything I can think of, while its height gave it the

appearance of drawing together at the top. We half hoped to find a way into the continent when we entered this ice-locked harbor, but the warm fresh current flowed, as I had rather expected it would from *beneath* the barrier, and apparently in great volume. The water in the harbor was only slightly brackish, and its temperature on our arrival about 36° Fahrenheit. How far it had come through the ice we could only surmise, or to what extent it would affect our winter climate. It would freeze solidly, no doubt, during the long winter, but even then we believed it would be only an added protection against the floes outside, and the squeeze of the pack. Altogether, we were mightily pleased with our winter quarters, and warmed and fed, and safe again on the old Billowcrest with those I loved, I was happier than I can say.

XVII.

INVESTIGATION AND DISCOVERY.

OUR days grew shorter rapidly. In the fading light we made haste to examine our surroundings with care, and to make sure that we could not find a still better location for the long winter ahead. When the water outside was clear of ice we cruised in the launch along the barrier to make what Chauncey Gale called "scientific developments." We became convinced, soon, that our warm river formed at its mouth the only available retreat for the Billowcrest, and further, that this river, following up the coast of Victoria Land, was without doubt the current noted by Borchgrevink, who seems not to have thought of tasting as well as testing its waters. Just outside the harbor this river is met by the slow-moving, southward flowing salt current, and forced aside. The ice-wall to the left, or westward, angles somewhat to the north, and the deflected current naturally follows this coast, diffusing itself gradually over the opposite-flowing, sluggish ocean current.

Examining our river at the point where it emerged from the ice, we found that at low tide there was a space of several feet between its normal surface and the massy barrier above, and in this we recognized a possible entrance to the inland continent, had there been any assurance that we should reach the other side, or, at least, a point above high-water mark before the tide's return. Chauncey Gale peered into the blackness, and shook his head.

"I don't like to go into a hole and pull the hole in after me," he said. "and it seems to me that's about what we'd do in this case."

We decided therefore not to attempt this, at most not until the return of summer, and after we had tested the efficiency of our balloon.

The river, we concluded, had been one day open to the sky throughout, but at some far-off period the ice and snows of winter had formed so deeply upon it that the summer warmth could not entirely dissolve them. Each year and century had added thickness and strength to this crystal bridge, until were it not for the widening harbor at the mouth, above which the ice appears never to have remained throughout the year, there would be little to mark the point of entrance.

Concerning the barrier itself, I became convinced that it was not, as reported by others, from points farther north, a mass formed about, or abreast of

a mountain range; but that where we were at least, it was the accumulation on a *comparatively flat shore* of the solidified snows of centuries. There is, of course, a heavy Antarctic snowfall each year, and this is partly melted and frozen again during almost every day of the long polar summer. The stratified lines in the barrier showed us clearly the formation of the upper layers, while the lower layers, formed countless ages ago, had settled and congealed into a concrete crystal mass. We decided that it was the formation of this mass out over the sea, and the final breaking off by its own weight, that produced the Antarctic berg, always recognized by its tabular, or flat, top and blue strata lines, the latter often showing throughout the full height of the berg's exposed surface—an elevation of two hundred feet or more.

But these lines above the water reveal merely what have been the topmost layers of the towering wall from whence the berg came. Below the water-line the ice extends downward for perhaps eighteen hundred feet, and this added to the height above gives approximately the elevation of the great Antarctic Barrier! For full two thousand feet above the Billowcrest rose this almost perpendicular blue precipice. Our harbor formed a little more than half a circle, and was something less than half a mile across. It will be seen, therefore, that

our name of Bottle Bay, conferred by Chauncey Gale on the moment of our arrival, was not inaptly chosen.

For a time we could not get rid of the feeling that the surrounding wall would presently topple and destroy us. But as days passed we grew strong in our security, while our opening to the north, whence, in this latitude, the sun sends its warmest comfort, became at midday a wonderful gate of gold. We named it the "Portal of the Sun," and through it, less than two months later, we were to see that life-giving luminary disappear. Would we be there to watch for its return when the long winter night had passed? Who should say?

XVIII.

A "BORNING" AND A MYSTERY.

ONE morning, a week after our arrival, as we sat at breakfast, we felt the Billowcrest suddenly rock beneath us, and a moment later there came a roar so mighty that it seemed the whole world must shudder with it. We looked at each other, our minds reverting to the moment of our arrival with the Pacemaker. But there was a difference in the sound. That had been a splitting, crashing terror. This also seemed the cry of a great rending asunder, but followed by a splendid, universal groan of peace. At first no one spoke, and we half rose to hasten on deck. But then, to Ferratoni, came the truth.

"Have no fright," he said, "it was but the borning of a giant."

We felt the vessel now slowly rising beneath us. Going out we found the water pouring into our harbor, displaced by the new-born berg. Had we been outside, the Billowcrest might have repeated her diving experiment.

When the water receded we went out in the launch to investigate. Following the wall for more than a mile we came to a wonderful gleaming monster, an infant Titan, setting out clumsily on its first voyage. Already there was a space between it and the mother barrier, and the great life current of the ocean was tugging it to the east.

"It's got a long trip before it," said Gale. "It'll be in many a tight place and get lots of hard rubs before it sees home again. How long do you suppose it will be?"

I shook my head.

"Depends a good deal on what luck it has, I suppose; same as with the rest of us.

We went a little way in behind the berg to inspect the new surface there. It was smooth and transparent.

"Look!" cried Edith Gale, pointing up.

Our eyes followed in the direction indicated, and we saw in the clear ice just above our heads something frozen. The light dazzled at first and we moved to the other side. Then we saw a huge animal form enclosed in the crystal. It was perfectly preserved. The body was smooth and dark, with long flippers, and extending in front for many feet was a slender neck or throat, ending in a head something like that of a great bird. We looked at it in silence for some moments; Gale said:

"Are we going to find such things as that when we get inside? If we are you can refund *my* money, now."

"That," I said, "is a plesiosaurus, or an ichthyosaurus. I can never quite remember which is which. But it's some kind of a 'saurus,' and it was washed up, or crept up there to die, probably more than a million years ago. If this were a scientific expedition we would rejoice, and dig it out. We might, anyway."

"No," dissented Gale, "I don't want to bring down another iceberg just yet, and besides, we've got other fish to fry."

"One might say other *sauruses* of amusement," added Edith Gale, with becoming solemnity.

"I think we'd better go home after that," said her father.

Entering the harbor, Ferratoni pointed to the surface of the water, a little way ahead, where something appeared to be floating. As we drew nearer our wonder increased, for it proved to be a part of a small boat, or canoe. It did not appear to have been in the water for any great length of time, and did not much resemble any craft we could recall. Captain Biffer decided that it was from some island of the South Pacific, and had been brought to us by the salt under-current. It had been forced into the harbor, he said, by the recent intide caused by the

new berg. To me, however, his argument did not seem tenable. I believed the craft had been brought by our warm river from the inner continent, battered to pieces on the way by rocks or crushed against the ice overhead. Edith Gale quite agreed with me in this, as did Ferratoni. Her father also seemed to favor the idea. We took the fragment—it was a piece of a sharp bow—to the forward cabin of the *Billowcrest*. Here we placed it on a little table, and gathering about it, Edith Gale, Ferratoni, and I constructed some curious fancies of those whose hands had fashioned it. To Ferratoni more than to us it seemed to speak; but, on the other hand, he revealed less of what it told him.

XIX.

A LONG FAREWELL.

AND now indeed the shadows gathered and closed in about us. Already our day was but a brief period of mournful twilight. Soon there would be only a chill redness in the northern sky at midday. Then this too would leave us, and the electric glow of the Billowcrest would be our only cheer.

With the coming of the dark, the friendly sea life—the penguins and the seals—vanished. They had visited us numerous during the early days of our arrival in Bottle Bay, and we did not realize what a comfort they had been until they were gone. Neither did we quite understand why they should go, when the water of the bay was still open. Yet we knew that they must be wiser in the matter than we, and we could not help being a bit depressed as we watched them becoming fewer each day, until the last one had regarded us solemnly and with a harsh note of farewell had deserted us for the open waters of the north.

Instinctively we drew nearer together and our interdependence became daily more evident. What gave trifling pleasure to one was a signal for a general rejoicing, while the slightest individual ailment became a matter of heavy concern to all.

There were so few of us, and the darkening waste about was so wide and desolate. Personal consideration and even tenderness crept into our daily round, and any dim shadows of discontent that may have lingered among us were gathered up by the approaching gloom.

The Captain informed us that on the Saturday before Easter we should see the sun for the last time. Gale said he was glad Easter fell late that year, and that we ought to do something special in the way of farewell ceremonies.

So on Saturday immediately after breakfast we began our programme. We were to have many other such diversions during the long night that followed, and as our first was fairly representative of the others I will give it somewhat in detail. There were a number of musical instruments on board and most of us could play, or at least strum a little. Edith Gale, who was a skilled musician, had composed something for the occasion, and led on the harp. Ferratoni played well on the violin, Gale had some mastery of the flute, and I could follow with chords on the piano. Then we had singing.

in which all joined, and the great barrier behind us echoed for the first time in all its million years to a grand old English ballad with a rousing chorus.

Now followed a literary series in which we were to give things of our own composition. Edith Gale was first on this programme. She did not need to read her effort. It was very brief.

"Beauty," she said, "and a love of the truly beautiful, are nature's best gifts to men and women. We have only to look and to listen, and we learn something of the joy of the Universe and the soothing spirit of peace. Even in this loneliness, and through the long night that lies now at our Gateway of the Sun, we may find, if we will understand it, something beside desolation and unilluminated dark. Within, we shall keep the semblance and memories of summertime. Without, will fall a night, mighty and solemn, and terrifying, but always majestic, always beautiful. And in our hearts we shall not grow faint, or despair.

After the acknowledgments Gale said:

"That's the sort of thing that Johnnie used to carry to the homes and hearthstones of Tangleside, and it's wonderful the way they seemed to take to it. What do you think about it, Bill? Do you think a love of the beautiful will be our greatest comfort during a hundred-day night? Let's hear from you."

Mr. Sturritt rose nervously.

"I—I am quite sure," he began, "that Miss Gale understands her bus—er—subject, I should say, but I would suggest, that, without proper nourishment—that is—food we would find it not easy to appreciate the less filling—er, I mean less material comforts of beauty."

Here Mr. Sturritt glanced at a little paper in his hand and continued more steadily.

"Without proper food man becomes ill in body and morals. With it, he becomes hopeful, and inspired to high achievements. Different foods result in varied trains of thought. Acting upon this I hope to produce a condensed lozenge or wafer that shall assist each according to his needs. The inventor, the artist and the poet will then be gently stimulated in imagination, command of words or rhythmic forces, as may be required."

Mr. Sturritt lowered his paper.

"For those lacking in their love of the truly beautiful I may also get up a dose—er, I should say—prepare a lozenge. For our long winter, however, I have laid in a line of—er—uncondensed supplies which I hope will make our memories of summer fonder, and the strangeness of the night less—less discouraging."

"Good for you, Bill," laughed Gale as he sat down. "Johnnie's all right too, but in a case of

this kind it's the food question that I'm thinking of. Who's next? Let's hear from you, Biffer."

The Captain rose with some embarrassment, and rather ponderously.

"I'm with Miss Gale, mostly," he began. "I've seen the sea in a storm so beautiful that I wasn't afraid, but the story I'm going to tell may seem to side some with Mr. Sturritt, too.

"Twenty-five years ago last January I was captain of a three-masted schooner in the colony trade, bound from Liverpool to Halifax. Five days out we struck one of the hardest no'theast storms I ever met. In less than an hour after she hit us we'd lost our main-mast, and our cook's galley was a wreck. Our deck was open at the seams in forty places and everything, including our provision, was wet with salt water. I ought to have run back but I didn't, and we hadn't more'n got out of that storm till another hit us, and then another, until we'd had eleven hurricanes in less than that many days, and were in the worst condition a vessel could get into and keep afloat. We had none too much provision to start with, and most of what we'd had was lost. There was no way to cook what we did have, so it was half a loaf of bread and a pint of water a day. and drifting along under a little dinky sail, with a signal of distress flying. Well, the wind kept up

and blew us across the ocean, somehow. We got in sight of Halifax light one evening, and right there we struck a nor'wester that laid us out proper. We rolled and pitched and waterlogged, and went back to sea again—God knows where.

“Then hard times did begin. It was four ounces of bread and half a gill of water a day for fifty days, and cold and freezing, trying to keep afloat.”

“And then you were rescued! Then you were taken off!”

It was Edith Gale. She was leaning forward, and her eyes glistening.

“No, Miss Gale, then we ran out of bread and water.”

“Oh, Captain Biffer!”

“For seven days there wa'n't any of either. Everybody laid down to die except me. I kep' up on responsibility, and stood at the wheel day and night. I didn't know where we was, and I didn't care, but somehow I couldn't let go of the wheel. Mebbe, if I'd appreciated nature a little more it would have helped, too, and I know a little food would have gone a long ways. But nature didn't seem to need us, and we didn't need nature. And all the food and water were gone, though pretty soon I didn't care for that, either. I didn't even

care much when I saw a big steamer coming right toward us. I was glad, of course, but I didn't care enough to make any hurrah over it, and neither did the men. But after we'd been carried on board, and I'd got through with a plate of soup, down in the Captain's room, I says; 'What day is it, Captain?' 'Why,' he says, 'didn't you know? It's Easter Sunday.' 'No,' I says, 'but the Lord be praised.' "

The glisten in Edith Gale's eyes had become tears. Captain Biffer and I had had our differences. Perhaps in a general way he still believed me an ass. But I had walked over and taken his hand before I remembered it.

"I want to shake a brave man's hand," I said.

"Mr. Larkins," said Gale, "suppose you give us your experience. What's the best thing to keep up on through a long dark night?"

"Well, Admiral," began Mr. Larkins, "I've never been shipwrecked, but I remember something about a dark night, and a man as got out into the wet of it. It was tin year ago, and I was comin' out of Manchester on the bark Mary Collins, bound fer Bombay. She was a shlow old tow-boat, an' the sailors were makin' fun of her from the shtarrrt. But there was one felly, named Doolan, who kep' at it continual, an' repeatin' all day that he could shwim to Bombay sooner than we

could get there on the Mary Collins. 'An,' Doolan,' I says, 'you may get a chance to thry it, if we hit one o' thim shqualls that I run into here two year ago.' An' it was the next night that we did that same, an' Doolan was up on the top-s'l yarrd. An' whin the thwist of the shquall hit Doolan, he wint off wid a whoop an' a currvin' plounge, an' one of the men below yells out 'Man overboard!' an' heaves a life-buoy into the blackness of it. But by the time we could put her about in that shquall, an' get back, there was no Doolan. We hadn't expected there would be. For whin a man dhrifts ashtern in a shquall on a darrk night his name *may* shtay Doolan, but it's more than likely to be Dinnis. So afther callin' an' showin' lights a bit, we wint on to Bombay in the direction that Doolan might be shwimmin', if he had a mind, now, to thry. An' whin we got to Bombay an' I wint to the Cushtom House an' walked in, I see a felly sthandin' by the rail, an' a-grinnin', an' by the Ghost of me Great Gran'mother if it wasn't Doolan! 'Don't be frightened, sur,' he says, 'it's me.' 'An' Doolan!' I says, 'an' how did you get here?' 'Shwimmin',' says Doolan, 'an' I told you I could beat the Mary Collins.'

"But it wasn't shwimmin' that saved Doolan, ner food, ner reshponsibility, ner even the beauties of nature, though he had a chance durin' the night he fell over to view thim at close range. It was

the life-buoy that saved Doolan, an' kep' him floatin' till he was picked up next mornin' by a shmarter boat that beat the Mary Collins to Bombay by one tide. I'm not sayin' but that the others air sush-tainin' too, but it was the life-buoy that saved Doolan."

"There are many kinds of life-buoys, Mr. Larkins," laughed Edith Gale, and I confess that Mr. Doolan seems to have found the one best suited to his needs. What is your experience, Mr. Emory?"

The quiet Second Officer was silent for a moment, and his face saddened.

"I was shipwrecked once," he said. "We lost our vessel and drifted for a long time in a leaky boat. A good many died. I was kept up by the memory of a girl, waiting for me at home. When I got there——"

Mr. Emory paused as if to gather himself. It had grown very still in the saloon.

"She was dead," he concluded, "so you see my shipwreck and dark night are not over yet."

Our narrow round had indeed brought us close together. I doubt if Emory had ever spoken of this before to any one. Edith Gale laid her hand on his arm.

"And she is still waiting," she said, "you must not forget that."

"Suppose we hear from you, Chase," said Gale, after a pause.

Matters had taken rather an unexpected turn. I felt that I could not discuss what would best sustain me through the dark night ahead without putting myself and one other person in a trying position. I made an effort to gain time.

"I think we should hear from the Admiral, now," I said.

"Oh, well," said Gale, "I'm not bashful if I *have* got new clothes on. Here's a few observations that I've jotted down from time to time, not especially for a dark night, but for any old night, or day either, when you happen to think about 'em. Gale straightened back and pulled down his vest comfortably. "Seventeen Observations," he began, "by Chauncey Gale. Homes and Firesides a Specialty."

I. "This is a good world if we just think so. The toothache is about the worst thing in it, and we can have the tooth pulled.

II. "There ain't so many mistakes in this world as people think. A man's pretty apt to get where he belongs by the time he's forty.

III. "It's easy to get rich if people only know it. Most folks want to make too hard work of it.

IV. "There may be men who could get rich playing poker, but I've only happened to meet the ones that had *tried* it.

V. "It isn't hard work to judge human nature if you let the other man do the talking.

VI. "A man's word may be as good as his bond, but if it is he won't mind giving his bond, too.

VII. "The commuter who keeps his lawn mowed is a gentleman. If he mows the vacant lot next to him, he's fit for a better world.

VIII. "Many a man is a blamed fool with the best intentions in the world.

IX. "A free show may be a good show, but if it is, the crowd will pay for it.

X. "A mosquito has no fear of death, and a pound of them will ruin the best addition ever laid out.

XI. "Luck is a good thing, but it's the men that don't count on it that mostly have it.

XII. "It isn't the biggest creature that can stand the most punishment. A lick that will only amuse a fly will kill a baby.

XIII. "Distance depends a good deal on how fast a man can walk. No addition should be more than five minutes from the station.

XIV. "A man can enjoy leisure just as well while he's waiting for a train as any other time if he'll only think so.

XV. "I never saw a failure yet that wasn't worth more than it cost, if the fellow that failed made use of it.

XVI. "The best way to make yourself liked is to make yourself worth liking.

XVII. "Never laugh at a lunatic's plans. The biggest fool scheme to-day may be a sound business proposition to-morrow."

Gale sat down amid enthusiasm. Most of his observations were not new in substance, and some of them I did not altogether agree with, but in them all I recognized the characteristic philosophy that had made Chauncey Gale the man I had learned to admire, and even to love. His last "observation," though uncomplimentary in form, explained to me our presence in Bottle Bay at this moment. I would endeavor to make it hold good.

"Come, Chase, it's your turn, now!"

"This," I said, rising, "is something I did while wandering about the docks of New York City. The editors that saw it didn't care for it, and I don't care very much for it now, myself. I have altered my opinion about some things since then—not about the sea, I mean, but about the—the most sustaining—that is, through a dark night—I mean, that is—now——"

"Never mind what you mean now," said Gale. "Suppose you read it and let us see if we can tell what you meant then."

I was glad enough for this interruption, and proceeded, forthwith:

SEA HERITAGE.

I was born with the sea in my blood—
The sea with its surge and its flow—
The voice of the tide at its flood
Keeps calling and calling to me,
And sooner or later I know
I must go back to the sea.

I hear it pound in the dark :
The salt mist creeps to my brain
As I lean from my window and hark
To the voice that keeps shouting for me
In vain—and yet, not in vain,
For I shall go back to the sea.

I long for the leap of the spray—
I lust for the swirl of the brine—
Though lingering day after day
(Land fetters still cumbering me)
Some morn I shall claim what is mine—
I will rise—I will go to the sea.

It may be a year, or a day—
It may be to-morrow—God knows !
When, to answer, I'll up and away,
But when and wherever it be,
This birthright is bound to foreclose—
I must go back to the sea !

“ Well, yes,” commented Gale, as I sat down.
“ I seem to gather what you were driving at then,
but it didn't seem to me you meant quite the same
thing the day we sailed.”

Edith Gale came out of a reverie to join in the

laugh. I wondered if she knew what I had meant by my floundering about before beginning the verses—if she realized that a word, or perhaps three words, from her would mean more to me now than all the seas and lands of earth.

But Ferratoni, at a signal from Gale, had arisen. For days he had been as one in a dream. We had thought him depressed by the oncoming night. It seems doubtful, now, that he even realized that there was a night.

“Force!” he began. “In that word lies the secret of all the worlds and skies.

“Force, and its visible symbol, vibration!

“Sound—it is vibration—all know it.

“Heat, light, color, Electricity—they are vibrations:—many recognize it.

“Life, thought, soul—these, too, are vibrations, yet more subtle:—I have proved it.

“And from vibrations—harmony.

“Music—the fitting together or chording of sounds—the union of vibrations—it is the form all know, it has soothed and charmed so many.”

He paused and looked toward Edith Gale.

“Beauty,” he continued, “that which *you* so well offer to men as spirit sustenance, what is it but the combining of life and color vibrations into chords which bring joy to those whose souls awake to answer?

“Harmony—it is Nature’s law. Only the hand of man may work discord. Left undisturbed for even a brief period, the wood and the stream, the meadow and the hill, fall into rhyme and melody, while from the sun and moon falls a quivering glory of light, and voices of the air come whispering or shouting past to blend more perfectly the elemental chord.”

His eyes wandered about to the others in the room.

“Lives vibrating to lives—the chord is friendship.” His gaze came back to Edith Gale, then to me. “Soul vibrates to soul—the chord is love.”

During the brief silence which followed this there was no question as to vibrations on my part. They were distinct waves, in fact, and I did not dare to look otherwise than straight ahead.

“For myself,” he continued, and I breathed again, “I have found the way of mental unity which means the voiceless speaking.”

He motioned to Miss Gale, who struck a chord on the harp near her. From the strings of the piano across the room came a faint yet perfect answer.

“That,” he said—“it contains it all. Thus the electric chords answer to each other and we speak without wires across the spaces. So the vibrations of the thought awaken in the mind of an-

other their echo, and men are made to know, and may answer, without words."

Once more he paused, and we had somehow a feeling that he was drifting away from us. When he spoke again there was in his voice the quality of one who, listening to faint far-off words, tries to repeat them.

"Somewhere," he said, "from out of the land we are about to enter—there is seeking us now such a message. It comes far through the spaces—the strings of my thought are not perfectly adjusted to its tuning. Here, in the close union of our daily round the difficulty is not. We have become in mental adjustment—our minds have formed in a chord to which it is not strange that I, who have given my life to such research, should have found the key—should have become able to know without words, as in another way I have been able to hear without wires."

He roused, as it were, and once more came back to us—to me, in fact.

"You," he continued, "are at this instant wondering if what I said of the answering soul be true. It is, and you shall presently know it. You," turning to Gale, "are thinking of the hour. You wished to consult your watch and hesitated out of consideration for me. You have no need. The Captain who sits behind you has just done so, and

it lacks still a half-hour of midday." He turned to Zar, who thus far had been a silent observer of the ceremonies. "You," he said, "are remembering a little sunny cabin in the North, where thirty years ago you lived with your little ones about you. One of them is grown, now; the others are dead."

Zar had comprehended little or nothing of what had gone before of Ferratoni's words. She had been in a reverie, but at this point she sprang to her feet excitedly.

"Good Lawd!" she cried, "what kin' o' man is dat? Stan' here an' tell me jes' puzzacly what I thinkin' dat berry minute! I gwine out o' here! I not gwine stay in no sech place!"

She set out hastily for the door. Her outbreak had brought the needed relaxation, and we all laughed.

"Come back," called Gale. "You haven't made your speech yet. We want to hear what you have to say."

The old woman turned suddenly.

"All right, den I tell you what I got to say! I's mighty good an' tired dis heah country! Dat's what I got to say! Heah we come off f'm a good civilianized lan' wheah de sun git up an' go to bed same as people do, an' come off heah wheah de sun git up ha'f way, an' cain't git up no furdah, and cain't git back nohow, but jes' stay dar week in an'

week out, an' keep hones' folks awake, an' den when it do git down cain't git up ag'in, an' de whole worl' freeze up a-waitin' foh hit. An' what we come foh? Why, to fin' a' old pole what can be pick' up in anybody's wood-pile, free foh ca'yin' off! Come down heah aftah a *pole*! What kin' o' pole you reck'n' gwine grow in such place, anyhow? I sh'd say pole! Why, you couldn't grow a bean pole! You couldn't grow a willer squich like I use to keep foh a little girl what need hit now—bringin' her ole mammy off down heah to freeze up in dis ice-jug! Come aftah a pole an' fine a hole, dat's what we done! No won'er Mistah Macaroni know what I thinkin' 'bout, when hit all freeze up an' stay heah, 'stid o' gwine wheah hit b'long!" The old woman paused an instant for breath, then in a deep voice of warning concluded her arraignment. "An' what kin' o' great black beas' gwine come an' get dis ship befo' we all see mo'nin'? What great black monstah comin' outen dis long black night what you-all mention? I know—hit Deff! Dat what comin'—Deff! Gwine out to say good-by to de sun, is you? Well, you bettah, caise when dat sun git roun' dis way ag'in, if hit evah do, hit's my 'pinion dat hit wait a long time befo' *we*-all come out to say 'Howdy!'"

The old woman flung herself out of the saloon. We laughed, but her final words had not been en-

tirely without effect. It was by no means impossible that during the long night the "black beast" would come, and that the returning sun would find fewer to bid it welcome.

"I think she speaks not with the spirit of prophecy," said Ferratoni, but nevertheless we grew rather silent as we passed into the gloom without. Edith Gale and I ascended to the bridge. The others did not follow, but huddled forward to the bow. It lacked still ten minutes of midday.

We now saw that the sky overhead was thick, but clear-streaked in the north. Where the sun would appear there was a sorrowful semblance of dawn. Far across the black, frozen wastes, chill bands of red and orange glowed feebly amid heavier bands of dusk violet. Profound, overpowering, the infinite dark and cold were upon us. Before it, philosophies dwindled and the need of warm human touch and sympathy came powerfully upon us all. Edith Gale did not speak, and instinctively we drew closer together. Somewhere beneath the fur wrappings my hand found hers. She did not withdraw it. The caution of Chauncey Gale seemed as far off as the place where he had spoken it. I leaned nearer to her. The word formed itself on my lips—I could not be blamed.

"Sweetheart!" I whispered.

She did not answer—the sun was coming.

Above the far rim it showed a thin rayless edge. Between, there seemed to lie a million miles of frozen sea. We watched it creep slowly westward. It was not a real sun, but a wraith—a vision such as Dante might have dreamed.

Again, leaning near, I whispered to her; and again, just at first, she did not answer. Then, very softly :

“ But it was not until you found the new world that you were to claim your reward.”

My heart bounded. She had remembered, then.

“ Yes—I wish only to *name* it, now.”

The sun that had grown to a narrow distorted segment became once more a wavering line.

“ Wait,” she said—“ not now—to-morrow, perhaps—in the morning——”

“ Morning? It is months till then. It is the long night I am thinking of——”

“ Yes, I know. I didn’t mean—I meant——” and then somehow my arm had found its way about her, and she was close, close, and did not draw away.

The sun went out. The black wall—the black sea—the great black Antarctic Night and cold closed in, but within and about us lay the ineffable glory that has lighted the world and warmed it since man first looked on woman and found her fair.

XX.

THE LONG DARK.

I CANNOT attempt to picture the vast Antarctic Night. The words I have learned were never intended to convey the supreme mightiness of the Polar Dark. Chauncey Gale has referred to it as "Creation's Cold Storage." I am willing to let it go at that.

In the electric blaze of the Billowcrest we made merry, and occupied ourselves usefully. When the cold without was not too severe we went snow-shoeing over Bottle Bay, where a crust of ice had eventually formed, and where snow grew ever deeper until we half expected to be overwhelmed. Sometimes we heard the roaring of the pack outside, but in our snug harbor we felt little of its grinding discontent. How much we were warmed by our current beneath the ice we could not know, but the thermometer at no time showed more than 30° below zero. I have seen it as cold in northern Nebraska.

Neither was it wholly dark in clear weather.

We had the stars, and at regular intervals, through our harbor gateway, the moon looked in. Often it was a weird, distorted moon—flattened and wrinkled by radiations of cold from the far-lying ice—but always welcome. More than once it was doubly and even trebly welcome, for the atmosphere was responsible for some curious effects. Once Gale came down hastily to where Edith and I were deep in a game of cribbage.

"I want you and Johnnie to come on deck a minute," he said with some urgency, "I want you to look at the moon."

We arrayed ourselves and obeyed. Gale led the way and pointed to the harbor entrance.

"Nick," he commanded, "I want you and Johnnie to tell me how many moons you see there."

My hand lay on Edith's arm and I gave it a significant pressure.

"Why," I said, "I see one moon, of course. How many do you want me to see?"

"I hope, papa," said his daughter gravely, "that you haven't been taking too much wine. You know that it doesn't agree with you. It makes you too stout, and now that it affects your eyes this way, I should think you would at least moderate your appetite for strong waters."

"Johnnie," said Gale severely, "you're a goose, as usual. But on the dead, now, I want you and

Nick to tell me how many moons you see there. I see three. If you only see one, then this cold storage, or something else, has got into my eyes, and it's time I was doing something for it."

We assured him, then, that we saw what he did, one real moon and two false ones, the result of some strange condition of the air. When we descended to the cabin, Gale followed singing,

"Three moons rose over the city where there shouldn't have been but one."

Besides these things we had the Aurora Australis, though from our position under the ice-wall we seldom got a direct view of this phenomenon, and we sometimes made excursions into the desolation of the pack to view it. On one of these we were separated from the ship by a wide waterway that opened just outside the harbor. It seemed a serious predicament for a time, but the little telephone, which we always carried, promptly "vibrated" a message to the ship, and our balloon-boat-and-sled combination was first put into actual service as a ferry to bring us safely over. From without, our harbor entrance had seemed a portal to the lower regions. Crossing to it in the boat was like being ferried over the river Styx.

To me the days did not drag, though to others of the party they may have passed less swiftly. Love did not speed the hours for them, unless in the

sense that all the ship loved the lovers, and in making our lives interesting for us they found sufficient entertainment for themselves. Gale's acceptance of the new understanding between Edith and myself had been characteristic and hearty.

"Well," he said, "'tain't my fault. Don't come around now, you and Johnnie, tryin' to blame it onto me. I told you how it would be. Oh Lord, what's a circus without monkeys!" He took our hands then, and squeezed them together in one big, splendid palm. "Nicholas Chase," he went on, "you've got the boat, and me, and now a mortgage on Johnnie. If there's any other outlying and unattached property you'd like to have, just name it. And if you don't see what you want ask for it. Johnnie's the only undivided interest I had left that I cared anything about, and if you're going to get that you might as well have all the rest." But at this point Edith had thrown her arms about his neck, laughing and crying at once. Happy as I was, there was a moment or two just then in which I did not feel entirely comfortable.

One day, perhaps a week later, when we came in from an hour's show-shoeing, he suddenly greeted us with:

"Look here, Johnnie, how did it come you didn't turn Nick down like the others?"

My sweetheart's cheeks were already aglow, and

her eyes sparkling. But I thought there came an added glow and sparkle at the unexpected question. Her eyes sent a quick look into mine that warmed my soul.

“Why, you see, Daddy, we—we were away off down here, and—and we couldn’t afford to have any unpleasantness on the ship, and——”

“Oh, yes, I see—I see! And you’re going to bounce him when we get back to New York. Great girl! Takes after her Daddy.”

From the hand that rested on my arm she had been withdrawing the little fur mitten. Now a small palm and some cold fingers came creeping up into mine for warmth, and to bestow a reassuring pressure.

“But—but don’t you see, Daddy,—I—I—we can’t afford to have any unpleasantness there, either,” she said.

We had a long series of whist rubbers in the cabin, and entertainments in which the forecandle was frequently invited to join. In turn, we sometimes looked in on the forecandle, or, for exercise, took a hand with the sailors in clearing snow and ice from the vessel. Altogether we were a well-fed, contented little world—a warm, bright spot in a wide waste of dark and cold—and even Zar grew stout and comfortable, and more considerate of my feelings.

"I can stay heah jes' as long as de boat stays and de perwision hold out," was her frequent assertion. "Mistah Sturritt certney is a mighty good perwid-er." And Mr Sturritt deserved this compliment, for whatever may have been his eccentricities in the matter of tablets, as our regular commissary, he appeared to be a complete and continuous success.

As spring approached and the return of the sun drew near, preparations for scaling the ice-wall and for the journey inland were perfected. Our balloon, the Cloudcrest, was carefully overhauled, and our boat-car furnished with all the requirements of an extended voyage, should we find, after making observations, such an undertaking to be advisable. The boat was very light and had air-tight aluminum compartments, as well as many water-tight compartments for our stores. Mr Sturritt's condensed food lozenges, which we had all tested and voted a success, were variously distributed.

"We don't want to carry all our pills in one box," explained Gale, "and say, Bill, don't you think we'd better leave one place for a few old-fashioned sandwiches? Just to start on, you know; then we can kind o' taper off onto tablets, as it were. You've fed us too well through the winter to jump right into pills at the drop of the hat."

So a place for sandwiches was left; also places for field-glasses and other instruments, as well as

for furs and sleeping-bags, which were likely to be needed, we thought, in the early stages of the journey. For ballast, instead of sand, we filled bags with zinc filings, these to be used later in making hydrogen for replenishing the balloon. It is true we thought it more than likely that we should return in some new fashion, to be provided by the Antarcticans, but we believed it well to be prepared for emergencies. Our propeller for both wind and water was now thoroughly tested, the retorts for making the gas were complete and ready, and all grew impatient at last for the day when we were to make our trial ascension.

Ferratoni, I think, was more eager than the others. He seemed convinced now that not only were there human beings beyond the barrier, but that they knew of us, and waited for our coming. In just what form this had "vibrated" to him he could not quite explain, and in fact rarely attempted to do so. He was quite willing, however, to experiment with us in telepathy, or, as he termed it, in the chording of mental vibrations, through which he could often follow a train of thought in another with a success that was certainly interesting, and even startling.

It appeared in no sense to be a gift with Ferratoni, but a scientific attainment, acquired by patient and gradual steps. He claimed that the principle

of it was quite as simple as that of the answering musical or electric vibrations—in fact, the same. We grew to accept this theory in time, though we made little progress in its application. Perhaps our minds were too full of other things.

To Ferratoni all the problems of the ages resolved themselves into Chorded Vibrations

“There is no change in the individual at death,” he said to me one day. “It is simply a moving out of the old house. The life vibration—the intelligence—remains the same. I shall be able by and by to chord and communicate with those no longer in the Physical House.”

Later, when I saw Edith, I said:

“The long night is telling on Ferratoni. He is becoming a spiritualist.”

Edith Gale looked thoughtful.

“If he does, he will be a scientific one,” she said, “and able to demonstrate reasonably the how and why of his inter-spheric communications. If all he says of his chorded vibrations be true, who shall say how far, and through what dim spaces they may not answer?”

You see, we had had time to speculate on a good many things during the long Antarctic Night. Even in an ordinary night, between the hours of three and five in the morning, strange problems come drifting in and the boundary lines between

substance and shadow waver. Keep this up for a period of months, without a break of sunlight, and one's skepticism on almost any point begins to totter. At the end of the third month, if Ferratoni had announced that he could render himself invisible and transport himself to any point of the compass at will, we would have been less surprised than eager to learn the process; and had Mr. Sturritt suddenly declared that he had perfected a lozenge which would confer eternal youth, I feel certain that any of us would have been willing to accept a trial package.

XXI.

AN ARRIVAL AND A DEPARTURE.

CURIOUSLY enough the sun made its first chill, brief reappearance on the anniversary of our sailing. Chill and brief it was, but that thin edge of light skirting the far northern horizon meant to all who saw it new hope, and a new hold on the realities of life.

The sky there had for some time been growing redder each day, and more than once we believed that the Captain's calculation would be proved at fault, and that the sun itself must appear. But the Captain's mathematics were sound, and the sun was on schedule time. In spite of Zar's prophecy we were all there to bid it "howdy," and there was not a soul on board, from the Admiral to the cook, that sent "regrets" to that reception. Captain Biffer had "bent on" a stiff new shirt for the occasion, and was smiling and triumphant.

"Wheah you reckon dat sun shinin' *warm*, now?" Zar asked in an awed voice.

"In New York City," answered her mistress, "just as it was the day we sailed."

"Shall we be back there a year from now?" I asked.

She held my arm close. Chauncey Gale answered.

"I will. Too far away from the Bowery down here."

But Ferratoni, who stood next me, said—speaking to himself, and so low that only I heard it—

"Not all of us will return."

I did not seem to hear, either, and I doubt if he knew that he had spoken; but a thing said like that creates an impression, and it set me to wondering. Then the brief exhibition was over, and we descended hastily to the warmth and feast waiting for us below.

There would be still nearly two months before we were willing to attempt our journey inland. We did not much care to face darkness in unknown wastes, and our continuous day would not begin until late in October. We were determined, however, to make much sooner the trial ascension for the purposes of observation, and to test the carrying power of the Cloudcrest. By the middle of September our days were of good length, and on the twentieth the divisions of light and darkness would be equal. We decided to make our preliminary ascension on that day.

It was only by chance that Edith Gale missed tak-

ing part in this momentous event. She had begged to be allowed to do so, and while neither Gale nor I approved of her going, we had more than half consented when Ferratoni came to our rescue by suggesting that we ought by all means to make the carrying test with just those who expected to undertake the voyage later.

This, both Gale and I declared, was a weighty argument, and my fiancée at length yielded, though I must confess with but a poor show of either filial or spousal obedience. She had been quite prepared to undertake a voyage, too, and even this wild notion had not been surrendered without severe reasoning.

"One of this firm's got to stay with the ship," Gale had said, finally. "Now, if you're going with the balloon, Johnnie, who's going to stay? Nick or me?"

She gave it up, then, and perhaps she had never been really serious in the matter. Only she couldn't bear the thought of our going away into the undiscovered lands without her. No one but Ferratoni and Mr. Sturritt were to accompany Gale and myself on the voyage inland, and Mr. Sturritt only on condition that the balloon in its trial ascension proved amply buoyant. He had counted on it from the first, having been with Gale in every undertaking for many years. Then, too, he wished to attend personally to our experiments with the food lozenge.

We were astir early on the morning of the twentieth, and had the gas going and the balloon inflated by ten o'clock. It was a clear winter morning, but still, and to us it seemed warm. Our entire population was gathered for the occasion.

"So you gwine to sail off into space, now, is yeh?" observed Zar, as we prepared to start.

"Yes, and your Miss Edith is going along," I answered, jestingly.

Zar whirled about.

"Look heah, honey! You don't mean to say you gwine up in dat skiff to pernavigate de skies, does yeh?"

"Of course, Zar. Why not?"

Miss Gale made a move as if to take her place in the boat, but the old woman, with a nimbleness and strength not consistent with her years, suddenly stepped forward and bore her off bodily, as she had so often done in childhood.

"Put me down, Zar!" pleaded Miss Gale, "put me down! I won't go—I promise!"

The old woman set her mistress upright and regarded her sternly.

"Well, I dess reckon you won't, honey," she announced, "lessen you walk ovah my old dead body! You wouldn't come on dis trip ef I'd knowed wheah we-all comin' to. I mighty tiahd sech fool-

ishness, an' dey ain' gwine be no moah of it! Air-skiff! Humph! I guess not!"

We were all ready now. By a short, stout rope, running from a stanchion through a ring in the deck to another ring in the bottom of our boat-car and thus back to the stanchion again, our balloon was held close captive. Coiled on the deck beside us lay twenty-five hundred feet of smaller rope, one end of it attached to the ring beneath the car, and the other lashed firmly about an iron "bit"—thus constituting our anchorage while aloft. The *Cloudcrest* was very large, certainly, and pulled desperately in the clear, cold air, but it did not seem possible that she would be able to lift all that great length of line. A little more than a hundred yards away was the perpendicular blue barrier of ice, beyond whose lofty summit we hoped soon to look. Our shorter anchorage was all that detained us, and a man stood ready with a keen knife, to sever at the word. When ready to descend we had only to open the valve above and let out the gas. We expected to be back in an hour.

Chauncey Gale took his seat last. He kissed his daughter as if he were starting on a journey. This inclination had seized me also, but not the resolution so I had merely pressed her hand. All except the man with the knife drew back.

"Ready! One, two, three, cut!"

There was a sharp hissing sound, a sudden upward jerk, and a white world fell away beneath us. The cold air rushed by and took our breath. Then presently it passed less swiftly. The weight of our anchor rope was beginning to tell. Like Alice falling into Wonderland we were going slowly enough at length to take in things as we went along. There were no empty jam-pots, but the swift panorama of the stratified wall was interesting. Ferratoni handed me the telephone.

"All right, below?" I called.

"All right! came the voice of Edith Gale, "but how small you are getting!"

"We feel bigger than we look!"

"Is Daddy all right?"

"Yes, he's getting out a sleeping-bag, so if he feels cold he can get into it."

Gale seized the transmitter.

"Slander," he called. "We've already found two hot bricks in Nick's pocket, and he's been begging like a stray kitten to be taken home!"

Up, and up, and up! The Billowcrest below grew small, then smaller, and became at last a toy boat tossed into a snowdrift. Nearer and nearer came the verge of the barrier.

"Can't you see over it yet?" called the voice in the phone. "It looks as if you could."

"Not yet! Soon, though. We're half crazy with excitement!"

"Tell me the instant you *can* see over, and just what you can see!"

"Yes, of course! In another second now—we——"

There was a sudden movement of the car. Looking up I saw that the balloon bag, now lifting above the barrier, had been caught in an upper current of air from the north, and was being carried inward, to the wall. In another instant it struck the jagged edge of the precipice, rebounded, was caught again by the air current and lifted, and with a wild sweep went plunging over the barrier, dragging us almost horizontally behind!

There came some startled cries through the telephone. Then, from behind, a sudden jerk that nearly flung us from the car. We had reached the end of our rope, so to speak, and had been pulled up, short. Too short, for the taut line, drawn across the sharp edge of ice, could not stand the strain. Well for us that it did not. We were already clawing tooth and nail at everything in sight, and our angle was becoming momentarily more precipitous. The car swung suddenly downward into an easier position, and then once more a white world dropped away beneath. We did not need to guess what had happened. We knew. The line had parted, and on the wings of a thirty mile wind we were bound for the South Pole.

XXII.

ON THE AIR-LINE, SOUTH.

It is needless to say that in the few brief seconds required for these things to happen I did not continue the conversation with my fiancée. The reader will understand that I was busy—too busy even to listen to the advice that was coming through the telephone. At least I suppose it was advice—Miss Gale would naturally give advice on an occasion like that, and besides there was nothing else that she could have given, anyway. But as the instrument was at that moment swinging over the side of the car, and would have been lost to us utterly, had not Ferratoni, with great foresight, nailed it securely at the other end, and as we were engaged in holding on to a half-overtaken air-boat with everything made by nature for that purpose, the connection was poor, and the advice, or sympathy, or whatever it was, wasted on the snow-clad fields.

For that is what lay below us as far as we could

see. The snow, the endless snow, and still the snow. From our far, cold height it seemed a level floor, though we know by what we found later that it must have been heaved and drifted.

We were very high. The dropping away of the greater part of our anchor rope had sent us up like a rocket. We were a bit confused, at first, but presently we faced each other, and the situation. We were bound southward—that much was certain—and at a rapid rate of speed. Gale was first to express himself.

“I’ve boarded a train going twenty-five mile an hour,” he panted, “but I never had to hold on with my teeth before. I haven’t had so much fun since I had the measles.”

“It *was* rather interesting for a second or two,” I assented.

Mr. Sturritt was examining the compartments where his tablets were stored.

“I feared we might have spilled—that is—been unfortunate with our supplies,” he explained. “They are all right, I see.”

“Oh, they’re all right, Bill. The tablets we have always with us. But how about the sandwiches? You didn’t put any in for this trip, of course!”

Mr. Sturritt looked mildly injured.

“Why, yes, I obeyed—that is—I followed instructions, and prepared for the trial ascension pre-

cisely as if we were to make the intended voyage. In order that the weight might—er——”

“Do you mean,” interrupted Gale, “that there are sandwiches in there?” tapping on the compartment reserved for that purpose.

“Yes, sir—or were, when we started.”

“Bill,” declared Gale, fervently, “if we ever get out of this snap, I’ll set you up in a business big enough to supply tablets to the whole civilized world and part of Long Island.”

“I should be quite satisfied to stay—that is, to remain—that is, if we ever get back to it, on the Billowcrest,” said Mr. Sturritt simply.

Gale turned to me.

“How long will it take to get to that warm country of yours, Nick?”

“If we keep on as we’re going, we ought to be in a much warmer climate by night,” I said, “and night won’t come so quickly, either, going in this direction. The continuous day is just beginning at the Pole, you know.”

Gale leaned back.

“All right,” he said, “I’d rather go to the end of the line than to try to get back over that ice-wall. Give us a through ticket and throw her wide open.”

Ferratoni meantime was fishing up the telephone, and after a brief examination passed it with gentle courtesy over to me.

"I do not need it, you know," he said.

I took it eagerly, though I did not quite gather his meaning. The little bell was already ringing violently. I called hastily into the transmitter:

"Hello! hello! down there! All well up here. All safe and bound for the South Pole."

Edith Gale's voice came back joyously.

"Oh, Nicholas! Oh, I was so frightened!"

"Don't worry a bit. We're a little ahead of schedule time, but we're off all right, and have got a clear track."

There was a brief pause, during which I imagined Miss Gale might be collecting herself after her excitement, and perhaps communicating the news to the others. Then her voice came again, somewhat more calmly.

"Oh, are you sure you're all right, and how's Daddy?"

"Supplied with sandwiches, and at peace with all mankind."

My tone reassured her.

"What can you see up there?" she asked eagerly.

"Nothing, so far, but snow, but there seem to be light fleecy clouds to the south, or maybe they're snow hills. If clouds, it would mean a warmer country, I think."

"How high up are you?"

"Well, perhaps a mile or so."

"Very cold up there?"

"It's getting cold. We were pretty warm at first, from exercise."

"Oh, weren't you frightened?"

"N—no, I don't think we had time."

She then asked me about Mr. Sturritt and Ferratoni, but before I could answer Ferratoni said:

"You may tell her that I gain happiness with every mile that passes."

"Could you hear her question?" I asked, surprised.

"Mentally, yes," he answered. "Even at this distance there is a perfect chording of the thought, as well as the electrical vibration."

I knew then what he had meant by not needing the telephone.

"Look here, we're going down," declared Gale, suddenly.

I peered over the side of the boat. Certainly the swift-flying waste below seemed to be coming nearer. We were no longer miles above the drifts. I doubted if we were even one mile, and they seemed to be rapidly coming nearer. I looked at Gale. What could it mean?

"I'll tell you," he said, "just what's the matter. We got a puncture when we struck the edge of that ice-wall. We're leaking gas, and we're going to be

dumped out, pretty soon, right here in the middle of nowhere."

There seemed no argument against this conclusion. I did not attempt any. The thing to do was to act.

"We'll have to throw out some of our ballast, quick," I said, "before we get down where our drag-rope can touch. That would pull on us still more. We must keep going as long as we can, unless you want to try to get back to the ship."

"And fall off that two thousand foot wall—not much!" said Gale. "We're going on."

Our bags of zinc filings were stored in a compartment at the bottom of the boat, under our furs and sleeping arrangements. I lifted the latter quickly and drew out some of the ballast. I passed the bags to Gale, who threw them over, one at a time. There was a slight upward pull as each went over, but still the white surface below remained distressingly near. The five hundred feet that still remained of our anchor rope seemed to cover more than half the distance, though this was, of course, deceptive. We continued to throw out our bags of filings until all were gone, and followed them with our supply of acid, which, without the zinc, would be of no value. Minus the means of making gas, our chances of return were, of course, much lessened, but the needs of the moment seemed all im-

portant and imperative. As we drew near the flying surface our speed appeared to increase, though in reality it probably slackened.

Our descent now became less rapid. Perhaps because the pressure of the gas was not so great, and also because the lower air was more buoyant. Still, it was not to be denied that we were drawing slowly, surely, nearer to the white plain below. We had not mentioned our predicament to those on the ship, and we said no word now of the impending disaster. We simply huddled down into our fur wrappings and waited, often looking over the side to note our progress, both southward and downward.

Finally, just after noon, it became evident that our anchor-rope would soon touch, and this would presently drag us down.

"How much does that rope weigh?" Gale asked, looking at me.

"About two hundred pounds, perhaps."

We remained looking at each other, and though not skilled like Ferratoni in such matters, I could read the thought in his mind. The rope, as I have said, was attached to the iron ring below. I would as soon have jumped over at once, as to have attempted to climb over and cut it. As for Gale, he was much too heavy, and not constructed for such work. But we knew we must get rid of that rope.

"Perhaps I can shoot it off," suggested Gale.

He drew a revolver from one of the compartments, and leaning over, fired repeatedly at the slender mark. But the end below was touching now, and this made it unsteady. He gave up at last, his hands numb with cold.

"Either I am a poor shot, or the bullets won't cut it," he said.

"There is no help for it," I thought. "I must make the attempt and die."

"No," said Ferratoni, "I will go over. You can put a rope around me."

But at this point Mr. Sturritt ventured to interfere.

"As a boy," he said, "I was something of a circus—that is—I was somewhat given to gymnastics, and I think I might properly undertake this matter."

"Bill," said Gale, fervently, "you're laying up treasures."

He was the lightest of the party. We put a small rope securely about him, and made loops to hold to from above. The elderly man laid off his outer furs, and in the icy air stepped nimbly to the edge. Then, knife in hand, he cautiously descended. He first tried holding to the side of the boat with one hand and reaching for the rope with the other. But this would not work, so, at his bidding, we lowered

him a few feet further. He gave himself a push outward as he descended. As he swung back under the boat he seized the rope below, and with a few deft cuts, severed it.

There was a sudden upward flight that prevented our hauling in immediately. Then we pulled straight up, and Mr. Sturritt's hands, and presently his head, appeared over the side. He tumbled in among us and we covered him with furs. We offered him brandy, for he was stiff and blue.

"N—no," he shivered, "in c—compartment four you will find a brown lozenge especially adapted to such occas—that is—to emergencies of this sort."

I hastily procured the tablets, and he swallowed two of them.

"Take a little whisky to wash 'em down, Bill."

But Mr. Sturritt shook his head, and presently seemed to grow quite warm among the furs. Then, closing his eyes, he slept. Gale regarded him fondly.

"Bully old Bill!" he said. "I never knew him to be afraid in my life, or to fail when it came to the pinch!"

XXIII.

THE CLOUDCREST MAKES A LANDING.

WE were fully half a mile above the white world now, and greatly encouraged. If we could keep this up for several hours I believed we might get beyond the snow barrier, or at least to a point where the cold was less intense. Already it seemed to me that the air was less keen. We felt little or no wind as we were traveling with it, and while we had started our propeller and kept it going steadily it did not add enough to our speed to cause any perceptible current of air from ahead. By two o'clock we agreed that it was considerably warmer than when we had started. The thermometer, too, showed a difference of several degrees, though this might be due to a variety of causes. At the ship, however, Edith reported no perceptible change, all of which added to our encouragement. Gale, meantime, had investigated the sandwiches, and found them not only safe, but packed to prevent freezing. We each took two, in addition to an al-

lowance of lozenges—all except Mr. Sturritt, who stood by his guns, or rather his tablets, and fared on this food only.

But by three o'clock it became evident that we must soon reach the end of the balloon stage of our journey. The Cloudcrest had done nobly in her crippled condition, but she was settling steadily now, and there was nothing else that we could afford to throw away. It was better, we said, to face the disaster of landing at once with our supplies than to throw them away and land finally with nothing. We believed that we had covered no less than a hundred and fifty miles, a distance which I had hoped would mark the limit of the snow-line, but in this, evidently, I had been mistaken. It was still a white level ahead, over which, if we escaped destruction in making our landing (and this seemed extremely doubtful at the rate of speed we were going), we would now be obliged to proceed, and much more slowly, on foot. I determined, therefore, to stick to the balloon as long as possible, even at the cost of some risk and discomfort.

But as we drew near the surface we saw that what had appeared to us a smooth level was billowed and drifted like the sea. We braced ourselves for the moment when we should strike. The chances were that we would be flung out with violence or dragged to death miserably.

Nearer and nearer we came, rushing down on the marble whiteness beneath.

"Do you know," said Gale suddenly, "it seems to me we are going down-hill."

"If we are," I replied, "it shows that the crust is getting thinner, and proves my theory of a warm country. I have thought it for some time, but I would not mention it until some one else—hi!—Look out!"

There was a sudden shock, and a blinding smash of snow that choked and stunned us. I gasped and coughed to get my breath. When I opened my eyes I saw that we had cut through the peak of the high drift I had seen coming just ahead, and bounded several feet into the air. But presently we settled again, and there was another jerk and smash, and another bound.

"We're hitting only the high places," gasped Gale.

"We won't hit many more," I gasped back.

We did hit another at that instant, and plowed through still another immediately afterward. Then we appeared to strike a comparatively smooth place, for we felt the rush and bump of the snow beneath almost constantly, though the spray of it became a blinding volume that meant suffocation and death.

"Cut the ropes!" shouted Gale, "and let her go!"

He was seated in the stern, and must have suited the action to the word, for I felt the bow, where I was, rise, and looking back saw Gale holding on for dear life to keep from spilling out behind. He did not look contented, and evidently had changed his mind about a through ticket. Like Uncle Laxart, he was willing to wait for the next balloon, or to walk, or to go in any way that was quieter. Ferratoni and Sturritt were also sawing at the side ropes, and I quickly got my knife ready to sever the single rope at the bow last. Mr. Sturritt succeeded in getting the ropes on his side cut off first, and for some moments our boat, or rather our sled, for it was that now, was pitching or rolling through the drifts on side or bottom, just as it happened. Then we seemed to right, and I guessed, though I could not see, that Ferratoni had in some manner got his ropes cut away. Our sled was being pulled now by its single cord up hill and down dale, helter-skelter, lickety-split, bounding, leaping, plunging, and courting destruction. From out of the madness of it all came Gale's voice.

"Here we come! Head us, somebody! Deru our fool souls, we're runnin' away!" And a second later, "Cut her, Nick, cut her! I can't stick on any longer!"

I had been holding the edge of my knife to the rope, hesitating to cut, for the reason that we ap-



“Cut her, Nick, cut her! I can’t stick on any longer!”—Page 202.

peared to have slowed down somewhat, and were yet making such excellent time. Now, with a slash, we were free.

There was a sudden halting, a plunge, a wild medley of legs and arms and ropes and Antarctic snow, and over all a tightly fitting cover, and blackness.

The cover was the overturned boat. The blackness, the inside of it, where I was. I was half stunned at first, however, and did not realize just what had occurred. Then I heard Gale's voice outside.

"Ring up the curtain, and let's see what's left."

I braced my back against whatever was above me and it rose. Then the light came under, and I saw Gale. Together we pushed and pulled up the boat and righted it. Under the boat with me had fallen both Mr. Sturritt and Ferratoni. The latter was gasping and getting his wind. The former was white and senseless, but opened his eyes almost immediately, and sat up. Gale, who had rolled out behind into a comfortable drift, was quite merry.

"Look yonder," he laughed.

I looked to the south and upward, as he pointed, and saw a dark spot against the sky. It was the bag of the Cloudcrest.

"If you get there before we do," sang Gale.

"Chauncey Gale," I said, "if every exploring

party had a man like you along there would be no such thing as failure."

"I think we'd better talk a little to Johnnie if the telephone's working," he said. "She may think we've gone to sleep."

We found the apparatus buried in the snow, but apparently uninjured. The little bell on it rang as soon as the snow was poked away.

"Hello," called Gale, "that you, Johnnie? Matter? With us? Why, nothing. We've been busy, that's all.—No, not quite so loud as it was.—Yes. Bell didn't ring, maybe.—Noise you heard? Oh, slacking down the propeller I guess. Or maybe Nick singing. We've camped for the night.—No. Nick thought it best now we've got where it's warm. Didn't know what we might get into, you know.—Yes, bully!—Yes, had to let out some gas. We'll have to throw out ballast of course in the morning.—Good place? Oh, yes,—nice and clean.—No, not *too* warm.—No, no trees yet.—Oh, why—we—we hitched it to—that is—we tied it to—to"—Gale slipped his hand over the transmitter and turned to me helplessly. "Nick, what under heavens did we hitch the balloon to, for the night? Tell me quick!"

"A—a peculiar petrified formation," I said hastily. "Might have been a tree, at one time, you know."

"Nick says it's a petrified tree.—Yes, only a few

of 'em left.—No. Tell Biff to hold the fort.—Yes, we must camp, now. Good-by!” He turned to me again. “Nick,” he said, “that was a good petrified lie of yours, and it worked in bully. No use to worry the little girl,” he added, “she’ll think about us enough, anyway.”

We prepared for the night. There was still a feeble sun in the west, and we made haste to get into comfortable quarters before it left us. I had learned something of navigation on the vessel, and securing an angle I calculated that we had made somewhat more than one hundred and sixty miles during the five hours of aerial travel. We were convinced now that the snow surface sloped to the southward. Our horizon showed this when we ascended to the top of the highest drifts, and the temperature also indicated our approach to a warmer zone. That the frozen crust was getting thinner we had no doubt, but the end of it seemed yet far distant, and the temperature about us was by no means of a sort to suggest a summer wardrobe.

The mechanical skill of Chauncey Gale now became manifest. Inverting our boat once more, there appeared folded legs which when pulled down formed short uprights. Also, there was a canvas that dropped around these, and made a continuous wall, with a flap door in front. On the snow floor inside we spread our furs, and at the opening there

was presently a little electric stove going, on which Mr. Sturritt was busily melting snow and preparing tea. This with some sandwiches and a generous round of lozenges formed our evening meal. We ate it, reclining on our furs, and were really quite cozy and comfortable. I had a presentiment that I could not adopt Mr. Sturritt's condensed food as a continuous diet. It would have been treason, however, to say so at this stage. Gale was very delicate in the matter.

"What's a picnic without peanuts!" he said, as he lit a cigar, and lay back in the darkness. "And, by the way, Bill, how many of those sandwiches have we got?"

"Why, I think plenty for—er—to-morrow—that is—at the present rate of consumption."

"Um—well, maybe we'd better begin tapering to-morrow then. One a meal, instead of two. We don't want to break in on tablets too suddenly, you know."

We crept into our sleeping bags—Gale and I together. We heard the clatter of fine drifting snow on our roof and canvas wall. We were not cold, and drowsiness presently came stealing over me—the reaction after all the excitement of the day.

Then out of the darkness came the face of Edith Gale. We were far apart for the first time in a year. Long, desolate, frozen miles lay between us.

To-morrow night the distance would be still greater. She did not know our plight—of that I was glad. Yet, in the end, it might be no worse than hers. The Billowcrest might never escape from her ice-locked harbor. And it was I who had brought all of this to pass. We were both isolated in this great frozen world, and all through a mad dream of my boyhood. I had an inclination to toss on my pillow, but the limits of the sleeping-bag did not permit this luxury. From out of the darkness at the other end of the boat came the voice of Ferratoni.

“It will avail nothing to disturb yourself,” he said gently, “and a good-night word would be comforting.”

I had forgotten the telephone. I reached out an arm for it now, and touched the call button. Almost immediately it answered, and then came Edith's voice.

“Hello! Who is it?”

“It's me—we're just going to sleep and want to say good night.”

“Are you really warm and nice? And is Daddy comfortable?”

“Yes, he's asleep, I think.”

“No, he isn't,” said Gale. “Give me that phone a minute.”

“Hi, Johnnie, that you?—Yes. You better go,

too.—Can't sleep? Why?—Oh, pshaw! we're snug as a bug. Go on, now. Say your prayers over twice, and get Zar to sing 'Brown Cows' to you! Good night!"

He handed me the transmitter.

"Good night," I said.

"Good night, dear," she called, "and God bless you!"

A sweet peace and comfort came upon me.

"Ferratoni," I said, "you deserve a crown!" But he did not answer.

Drowsiness once more came down like a soft curtain. Then the sleepy voice of Gale:

"Bill!"

"Yes, sir."

"How did it happen, when you cut the rope to-day and the balloon shot up, that your weight didn't jerk us all out? I didn't feel any jerk."

"No, sir—I—I—had grabbed—that is—seized hold quite firmly of the bit of rope above, sir."

There was another silence, and then I half-heard, mingled with a dream that was just beginning, the far-off sleepy voice of Gale, whispering,

"Bully old Bill!"

XXIV.

THE GREAT WHITE WAY.

SEPT. 21. All day we have been pushing our boat-sleigh, and to-night we are between fifteen and twenty miles farther south than last. We made fairly good progress in spite of the drifts, because of the general down-slope, which in some places was such that we got into our boat and the wind carried us along. Gale and Ferratoni are fixing up a sail to use to-morrow. It will be rigged between two of the uprights, forward. The wings of our propeller were smashed in the fall. We are all very tired to-night, and very hungry, for our light ration of sandwiches does not go far, and the food lozenges become unpleasant when eaten in any quantity. Mr. Sturritt explains that we do not quite follow instructions, but I noticed this evening a very sad look on his face, so perhaps he is experiencing some difficulty with them himself, as a steady diet, for he still persistently declines the sandwiches. I hope we shall reach somewhere or something to-morrow. Otherwise we shall be in very bad straits in the matter of food. Fortunately

we have plenty of tea and coffee. The air has grown warmer, and a soft snow is falling. It is what we would call good winter weather in northern Nebraska.

Sept. 22. Another day of pushing and sailing our boat-sledge. The sail is a success, and a great help. We have made good time, but there is no sign of dry land yet, and our last sandwiches are gone. To-morrow it will be tablets or nothing. We have not confessed it to each other, but I think it will be *nothing*. Even Mr. Sturritt looks wretched when it comes mealtime. He steadily refuses the sandwiches, however.

It is clear and cold to-night, but it was much warmer through the day than yesterday. We are almost too warm, in fact, when we are pushing the boat. Gale never loses heart. He keeps up the deception with Edith, though this is not so easy as it would seem. He told her to-day that we were "laying up," because of adverse winds. Her voice in the telephone seems weaker than it was, perhaps because of our reaching a lower level, and the increasing distance. Like the Marconi system, this may require that one end of the circuit should be much higher than the other in order to get the best results. Ferratoni thinks the jar of our fall may have affected the instrument, too. I hope and pray that it will not fail us altogether, for the voices from

the ship are our greatest comfort. Last night, just as I was dozing off I heard my name called gently.

"Nicholas!"

It was Edith's voice, and close to my ear. I answered softly, for the others were already sleeping. Then she said:

"Nicholas, Zar is going to sing to me, don't you want to hear, too?"

"Oh, yes, I should love to."

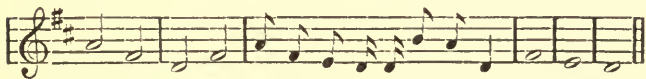
There came a mumble of protest in the receiver. Evidently Zar did not altogether approve of singing us both to sleep at once, even though so many frozen miles lay between. Then this ceased, and a moment later, vibrating across the wastes in a rich, crooning chant, came her song of the "Old Brown Cows." *



Dark come down an' dey ain' come home-- Dark come down an'



dey ain' come home--Dark come down an' dey ain' come home—Ole brown



cows. Ole brown cows—Strayin' away from de mastah's gate, Ole brown cows.

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“ Dark come down an’ dey ain’ come home—
Dark come down an’ dey ain’ come home—
Dark come down an’ dey ain’ come home—

Ole brown cows.

Ole brown cows—

Straying away from de mastah’s gate,

Ole brown cows.

“ Look way down to to de pastur’ lot—
Call way down th’ough the clovah fiel’—
Hunt way down by de cattle pon’

Foh ole brown cows.

Ole brown cows—

Call ’em home to de mastah’s gate,

Ole brown cows.

“ What dat tinkle-in’ th’ough de wood?
What dat browserin’ ’long de haidge?
What dat shuffle-in’ down de lane?

Ole brown cows.

Ole brown cows—

All come home to de mastah’s gate—

Ole brown cows.”

Sept. 23. The wind keeps with us, and whenever we find a decently smooth place we can sail. Otherwise, we should make little progress, for we are too weak from weariness and lack of food to do much at pushing the boat. We kept up to-day on coffee and tea. We can’t eat any more tablets, and Mr. Sturritt, who forced down a number of them, had something like nervous spasms afterwards. To-night, when he stopped for camp, he sat down and cried. Gale comforted him.

"Poor Bill," he said "poor old Bill. *Don't* break down. We'll get out of this mess some way. We always have, you know."

"It isn't that," moaned Sturritt, "I'm not afraid. It's the tab—that is—the lozenges. They've failed me. I—I can't eat 'em, myself!"

Sept. 24. Strange what will come out of this white desolation. Last night, after the others were asleep, Ferratoni and I talked softly of evolution and immortality. He believes in transmigration, and that the horse is the next step before man. I was barely awake at last, and closed my eyes to a vision of four jaded horses that were dragging a heavy boat across the sun-bright snow.

Sept. 25. This morning a white bird—the first life we have seen—lighted near our camp, and Gale shot it with his revolver. It was a fine shot, for the bird was not large—barely a good bite apiece. It revived us more than would seem possible, and encouraged us in the belief that we are nearing bare ground. We pushed on to the south, though very slowly. We have made no more than twenty miles in the past three days. Other birds passed, but neither Gale nor the rest of us could hit them. We were soon wretchedly hungry again, and desperate.

About noon Gale was taken quite unexpectedly with a religious turn, and offered a prayer. It

seemed fervent enough, but on the whole I did not think much of it. He said:

"Oh, Lord, we seem to have run the lines of this addition wrong. We've made a poor survey and we can't find any corner-stones. There's no use trying to get back to the ship, and we don't seem to be able to get anywhere else. We're hungry, Lord, too, and we can't eat any more of Bill's tablets. He can't eat 'em himself. I've tried to shoot birds, but I only hit one, and I think that was an accident. I've shot and shot and used up about all my ammunition. I can't hit a thing, Lord, and the other boys shoot worse than I do. It's your turn now, Lord. Amen.

It may be that this prayer did some good, for in the afternoon a whole flock of birds lit near us, and Gale threw his revolver among them, killing two. We feel sure these birds indicate bare earth not far away. But we must reach it soon. Gale is, as ever, full of cheer. Ferratoni does not seem to flag, while I am buoyed up by hope, and still have, though it comes each day more faintly, the voice of the woman I love, to give me strength and courage. But poor old Sturritt, who is heart-broken over the failure of his food lozenge, won't last long as things are. I gave him my part of the last birds to-day. I divided them, so he didn't know the difference.

XXV.

WHERE THE WAY ENDS.

BUT now came a great day.

It began with a discovery. My pockets had been full of lozenges which I could not eat, and I had emptied them out on the snow. It seems, however, that I had left two in my coat pocket—a white one and a brown one. I had such a gnawing hunger after we started that when I felt these there, I put them both in my mouth together, thinking to hold them a moment and then take them out before they sickened me.

But, strangely enough, they did not do so. As they dissolved I swallowed them, and when they were gone I felt strengthened. Then I asked Mr. Sturritt if he had ever tried this particular combination. He shook his head sadly and said no, but that it was no use. I then told him what I had done, and he made the experiment. Presently we were all consuming brown and white lozenges, and satisfying what the advertisements refer to as a

"long-felt want." Mr Sturritt was almost mad with delight. He grew ten years younger in as many minutes, and capered about in the snow until he caught his foot in one of the runners and fell head-first into a drift. Then we all laughed, and got hold of the boat and sent it ahead faster than it had gone since we landed. The brown was the medicated lozenge, intended for extreme cold and exhaustion. Combined with the white soup lozenge, it formed an acceptable nourishment, and we had an ample store of both colors.

The next event of the day came about eleven o'clock. Gale, who was looking ahead, stopped suddenly.

"Hey! Black snow on the port bow!" he called.

We all looked where he pointed. Then I gave a whoop.

"Not snow!" I cried, "but land!"

We ran forward like boys. No, it was not land, after all, but the next thing to it—a great black expanse of bare, wind-swept rock! We could not tell, of course, how high it rose above the normal surface, but we did not believe it could be many feet. Looking ahead with the glass we saw many other black patches, stretching away and blending together, as it seemed, on the horizon. We made all haste forward, and when we stopped for our noon rest I made a calculation of our position. We were

not quite to the eighty-third parallel, and a little more than two hundred miles from the Billowcrest. I had calculated that the habitable zone would begin here, but it appeared that I had been in error. The cold from the sea reached farther inland than I had supposed. Still, I reflected, this place might be altogether clear of snow a month later, and only uninhabitable because of barrenness.

Immediately after our coffee we pushed on again. All at once I made out what seemed to be the opening, or chasm, among the bare patches to the right. Leaving the others, I ran over to investigate and came back shouting and breathless.

"A river! a river!" I called, "and smooth ice. We can sail on it!"

We steered our boat-sled over there as rapidly as possible. It was difficult getting down to the surface, some forty feet below, but we managed it at last. Then we stopped for breath and observation.

"I'll bet this is *our* river," said Gale, "and that we haven't been more than a mile from it since we started."

"No doubt of it," I said, "and we even may have been on top of it part of the time. Of course it's filled level full of snow somewhere below here, and we shouldn't have known the difference. It is a channel that cuts through and carries the melting

snow to the sea. If it didn't the center of the Antarctic Continent would be a big circular pond. There may be many of these rivers."

"Well, one is enough for us, just now," said Gale. Then he promptly confessed to Edith that we had "abandoned" our balloon bag, owing to "adverse winds," but that we didn't care, for we had reached a river and "good sailing." She didn't appear to notice any discrepancy in this statement, and we decided that it would be unsafe to attempt to mend it. The "good sailing," at least, was true, for the wind continued favorable, and we were presently going up-stream at a fair rate of speed. Gale leaned back and lit a cigar.

"This beats pushing," he said. "Good boat, good crowd, good cigar. What is joy without a jews-harp!"

By nightfall—it fell much later now—the snowbanks on either side were no more than ten feet high on a level, and when we stopped for camp we found the country above almost more black than white—the bare rocks showing in masses in all directions.

We rejoiced greatly, and fondly hoped to be out of the snow altogether by the following evening, though I was a bit uneasy about the rock. If the Antarctic Continent proved to be nothing but barren granite it would be of as little value as if it were a waste of snow. Still, a circle of nearly a thou-

sand miles in diameter could hardly be the same throughout.

Our failing telephone, however, was a real sorrow. Though still distinct, the voices were very faint, now. Unless Ferratoni could do something, it would fail us altogether, soon. He believed its condition due mainly to our lower altitude, and the vast obstruction that was now lying between us and the Billowcrest. But it had been a great comfort to us all through our hardest hours, and I would be content. The mental vibrations from the vessel, Ferratoni said, were similarly affected, and much confused.

Another day of discovery followed. The wind and weather being too good to waste, by five o'clock we were on our way up the river. The snow crust thinned out rapidly, until, by ten o'clock, there was no more than a foot on the banks above, and we were sailing between shores of genuine stone and clay, the first soil we had seen for a year. Flocks of birds became plentiful, and at one place we saw some strange, brown animals, about the size and shape of rabbits, but with very long hind legs and with a method of locomotion similar to that of a frog. Gale named them "Skipteroons" because of their lightsome mode of travel, and shot at them, without success.

The temperature was barely freezing, now, and

we were altogether happy. So much so that we confessed to Edith all the affair of the balloon, and our subsequent difficulties. She was less surprised than we had expected. She had suspected, it seems, that all was not so well as we had pretended, and of course our statements *had* been a trifle contradictory at times. But she rejoiced now in the reality of good fortune that had come to us, the genuineness of which could not be mistaken, even through our fast failing telephone.

Several times we halted and climbed up on the shore to look at the country for possible inhabitants, but there was as yet no human sign, though much bird life, and some more of the funny half-rabbit creatures, one of which Gale succeeded in killing at last, a welcome addition to our bill-of-fare. All at once, about four o'clock, Ferratoni held out his hand. "Listen!" he said.

We listened very hard, and thought we heard a roaring sound ahead, but as the wind was blowing in that direction, we could not be sure. It grew stronger, however, as we ascended, and was steady and continuous. We decided that it was a fall, and not far away. Hardly had we made this conclusion when there was a cracking sound beneath us, followed by a crash of ice and a splash of water, and our boat-sleigh was no longer a sleigh at all, but a genuine boat, battling with a strong current and

broken ice. Our momentum had sent us ahead a few feet, but our sail was too small to stem the current and we were drifting back to the jagged ice. This time it was Ferratoni who saved the situation. He had foreseen just such an emergency and had at hand the little propeller wheel for water. With a quick movement, now, he plunged it beneath the surface at the stern, and deftly slipping and locking it into place, pressed the button of the dynamo. We were off, like a trolley car. The thin ice ahead parted before our sharp bow, and in a few moments we were in open water, heading up-stream under both electricity and sail.

"Like gettin' money from home," said Gale. "Look here, Nick, where would your boat scheme have been, anyway, without Tony and me to help you out?"

Certainly the propeller was a success, and I approved it heartily.

We rounded a bend a little later, and the fall came in sight. It was perhaps a mile away and was a long rapid, rather than a fall. There was no thought of ascending it with the boat. Already the current was very swift, and the shores narrowing together. We headed in for the bank. Landing proved a hard job, for the bank here was rather high, and very steep. We had to unload most of our things and carry them up in our arms. By

the time we got everything up we were too tired to attempt to climb the long hill which we now saw rose ahead of us. It was this rise that formed the rapid, and against it the snow had blown and drifted, though this was all the better for us, as it made the ascent easier for the boat, which would have been hard to push up over rough, bare rocks. To-morrow morning we would know what lay beyond that hill. To-night we were resting, and getting strength from the "skipteroon" for a long tug. Zar had promised to sing "Brown Cows" to me, and perhaps for the last time, for Edith Gale's voice when I had called to her just now was barely audible, even though she must have spoken very loudly. I was obliged to shout to make her hear, which made any expression of tenderness between us somewhat difficult. Zar's voice, however, would probably carry.

XXVI.

THE WELCOME TO THE UNKNOWN.

AND now came the day of days! Early in the morning we reloaded our boat, and set out eagerly. The wind helped us somewhat in our upward pull but it was a hard tug. Often we propped our load, and halted for breath. The hill seemed to grow longer as we ascended.

"Nick," said Gale, "I believe this is the South Pole, and that we're climbing it."

"It isn't quite that," I said, "but it may be the end of the bare rocks and snow. I shouldn't wonder if all this bare rock has had the dirt washed off by the million years or so of melting drifts. We've already seen dirt along the river bank, and there should be more of it where the snow ends. If this is the place, it explains this rise."

We tugged on and up. When at last we were within a stone's throw of the summit, our eagerness made us silent. We halted once more before the final effort.

"Nick," panted Gale, "it's the Promised Land. You're entitled to the first look. Go on ahead, and come back and tell us."

"No," I said, "we'll leave the boat here, and go up four abreast, to look over."

"Anyhow, you'll see it first, that way," said Gale, "and Bill next."

Side by side we hurried forward. Just at the brow, the hill was a bit steeper, and there was a surface of bare rock, over which we scrambled, and a moment later stood on the summit. Then——

Before us—level upland with here and there a patch of white, where snow still lingered. But between and beyond the white, beginning at our feet, and stretching away to the farthest horizon limits, a thick, yielding carpet of wonderful Purple Violets!

Mr. Sturritt was first to speak.

"The Lord be praised for all His mercies!" he said.

Ferratoni was down with his face among the leaves and blossoms.

Gale said: "I've been to violet receptions before, but this rather lays it over anything, so far."

As for me, I was silent. I hardly knew what I had expected to see. Perhaps trees—perhaps a distant city—perhaps a waste of barren downs. But certainly not this. I knew, of course, that flowers bloomed at the very edge of Alaskan glaciers, but perhaps I had forgotten. Like Ferratoni, I got down to feel and smell them. They had a sweet,

delicate odor, that had been borne from us by the wind. The blossom itself was somewhat different in form from our northern violets, and was of a darker hue. The leaf was smaller.

Through a sea of bloom we pushed our boat toward the river above the rapids. The banks were lower, here, and there was no more ice. We were presently sailing between violet-scented shores, and the silence and balm that was in the air brought forgetfulness of our difficulties. To the ship we attempted to convey the great news, but now our telephone failed us almost entirely, and in spite of all that Ferratoni could do to it, it was with the greatest difficulty that we finally conveyed the bare facts, sacrificing altogether the poetic details of the scene about us.

My first attempt to explain to Edith that we were met with violets was understood by her to be "violence," and this was not easy to get rid of. However, she comprehended at last, and had she been standing on top of the ice-barrier, I think she could have heard me, without the telephone. As for her voice, it was lost utterly in the wide space between, and only the searching quality of Captain Biffer's tones could convey to us her replies. Even these were lost when we tried again, a little later. Being thus cut off from the ship saddened us, in spite of our pleasant surroundings.

"We'll have to go it alone," commented Gale. "Mebbe we'll hit another set of vibrations up here, somewhere, and be all right again. We're likely to strike most anything now. Anyway Johnnie knows we were doing well at last accounts. Do you know," he added, some minutes later, "this would be a great place to lay out an addition. Violet Mead—how's that for a name? Acre property, no grading, and if there was any way of getting over that ice-wall, it would be the easiest thing in the world to run a gravity railroad down the snow-bank from Bottle Bay right to this meadow. There's a steady incline and the drifts would be easy to cut through."

"How about the melting underneath in the summer, and the drifting overhead in the winter?" I asked. "I think a line of balloons would be more practical."

Gale shook his head.

"No more balloons in mine. The going is well enough, but it's the free and easy way you have of starting and stopping that I object to."

Gradually the sun slipped down behind the violet fields. The wind died, and a scented, luminous twilight fell. The atmosphere was like an evening in late April. We were preparing to land for the night, when a dark speck appeared on the river ahead. The surface of the water was a dull red

gold, reflecting the western sky. Into this there had drifted a sharp, black outline—a boat, we saw presently—a sort of canoe. It was the first indication of human life, and we held our breath, wondering. As it approached, it appeared empty.

We turned our craft toward it, and it drifted just under our side. We leaned over and looked down. A face looked up into ours—the white, dead face of a beautiful young girl, and above and about her there were masses and festoons of flowers.

We held the boat a little, and regarded the sleeper without speaking. She was so beautiful, and had come to us so silently out of the unknown land.

Twilight deepened.

Then presently we loosed the little funeral boat, and saw it pass down into the dimness of evening to the land of eternal cold.

“It was a part of just such a boat that we found in Bottle Bay,” Gale said, as we drew near the shore. “This accounts for its being there.”

I assented, but we did not discuss the matter further, and we spoke but little as we prepared for the night. Communication with those behind had ceased. Before us was mystery, and about us silence. Cut off from every tie we knew, we had entered an enchanted land, and the spell of its potent magic came down with the perfumed dark.

XXVII.

THE PRINCE OF THE PURPLE FIELDS.

I WOKE next morning to an odor even more inspiring than the smell of violets. There was that about it which at first made me distrust my senses. It seemed too good to be true—that searching, pervading, heavenly odor. I closed my eyes and opened them to make sure I was awake. Then it came again—more persistent than before—and with it a sputter and a crackle. It was! It was! I could not be deceived—it was frying fish!

Gale, it seems, had risen early, upturned some insects and worms from under the violet sod, and found splendid fishing but a step away. Mr. Sturritt had promptly joined him, and now there was ready a breakfast that made up for many days of fasting and tablets.

“I don’t know what kind of fish they are,” explained Gale, “but they seemed as hungry as we were, so we formed a sort of mutual benefit association. Sort of a first aid to the famished.”

The morning was still and beautiful. We had rested on violet beds, and after our bounteous

breakfast we set out southward again, in the joyous expectation of further discovery. We were in excellent spirits; the air was balm and the dangers of cold and hunger were behind us. It is true that the Billowcrest was also there, and between, a wide desolation which we could hardly hope to surmount with our present resources. But this fact we kept in the background. It was not an immediate concern, and we were willing to believe that to-morrow, and the day after, and the month following would in some manner provide ways and develop means.

Chauncey Gale became particularly jubilant as we ascended.

"If all the people are like that girl we saw last night," he said at last,—“I don't mean of course if they are all dead, but if they all *look* like that,—it seems to me that this is about the best addition the Lord has yet laid out. Maybe this is His own little pet corner down here, and He didn't think anybody else would find it. You know I felt a good deal that way when I laid out Tangleside. It was a little shut-in neck of woods, and some of Johnnie's friends liked it, so we just bought it and let 'em have it. I didn't suppose anybody else would ever think of wanting to live there, but they did. People found out that we didn't want them, and you couldn't keep them away with clubs. They over-

run the place and ruined it. Johnnie couldn't do a thing with them. They cut out the trees and bushes that grew there, and set out a lot of nursery stuff that broke Johnnie's heart in six months. If this place should turn out to be a sort of Tangle-side of the Lord's, I suppose He'd like it just as well if we kept out. But if the people are all like that girl——"

"You shall know presently," interrupted Ferratoni. "They are just ahead."

He had scarcely spoken before during the morning, and there was now a quality in his voice that made us all look first at him, and then in the direction his eyes followed. We thought he might have received some mental impression, but saw now that just beyond a little knoll on the shore, and coming down to the marge to meet us, were the figures of men. It did not surprise us; we had expected them even sooner. During our approach they regarded us, as we them, in silence.

They were very fair—almost pallid of countenance—graceful rather than robust. Their dress was quite simple in form. Something akin to both the early Syrian and Japanese it seemed, and appeared to have grown for them, rather than to have been constructed by artificial devices. Their faces were smooth, and their hair long—parted on top and gathered loosely at the back with a sort of cir-

clet or band. To me they seemed as a part with the fields and sky behind them—some new flowering of our enchanted land.

All were young, but one younger and handsomer than the others advanced as our boat grounded. His wide-sleeved coat, or tunic, of soft glistening white was embroidered over with the flower of the plains above us. That he was of rank seemed evident. Gale, who was in the bow, stepped ashore and held out his hand to this fair youth, who laid his own in it, unhesitatingly.

“How are you?” greeted Gale, heartily. “Glad to see you. We’ve had all kinds of a time getting here, and it’s good to find somebody at home. My name is Gale, Chauncey Gale, and these are my friends. We’re from New York City, United States of America—best town and biggest country on earth. We’ve come down here to discover you, and take a look at your country to see whether we want to annex it or not. Up till yesterday we didn’t think we did, but the farther we get into your proposition the better we like it. Now, tell us who *you* are.”

During this rather characteristic greeting the youth had been regarding Gale with puzzled inquiry. He answered now with a gentle flow of aspirate syllables—a little address it seemed. The sounds were pleasant to the ear, but often barely

audible. As he spoke, he pointed now and then to the half-dozen others about him.

We followed Gale ashore, and something like a general hand-shaking took place. The youth's followers, however, showed no disposition to do more than lay their palms to ours for a brief instant, and then retire. But when the youth himself came to Ferratoni, their hands lingered together, and the puzzled look that had been on the face of each melted away. Then the youth spoke again, still holding Ferratoni's hand. When he had finished, the latter, turning to us, said:

"He is the Prince of the Purple Fields. We are in the borders of his domain. With his followers he escorted until yesterday a young lady of his court for a distance on her journey to the Land of the Silent Cold. It was she we passed. Two days ago something which must have been our balloon bag was blown to them, and it was thought we were not far distant. They have dimly known of our coming, somewhat as I had received an impression of their existence."

We regarded our companion with increasing wonder and amazement.

"But, Ferratoni," I said, "you do not mean to say that you understand their language."

"Not the words. The language of thought is the same to all men. The vibration between us is

by no means perfect, but when timed to the slow measure of speech, the mental echo is sufficiently good to follow his meaning."

"Look here," asked Gale, "can't you twist up my strings a little? I'd like to get in key and know what's going on, too."

"And does he also follow your thought?" I put in.

But the youth was speaking again and Ferratoni gave him close attention. Then he interpreted.

"The conscious exchange of thought without words, he tells me, marks their advancement in communication—perhaps somewhat as the wireless interchange of words marks ours. Their progress has been along different lines it seems. The Prince and his sister, the Princess of the Lilled Hills, whose domain lies beyond this, bid us welcome. Your thought, however, he does not reach as yet, except through me, and this requires a double or repeated process, somewhat like translation."

"Well," muttered Gale, "I'm rather glad of that. I want to have a few thinks all to myself when I'm in a new place and seeing things."

The Prince now said something further to Ferratoni, and then with his suite set off up the bank.

"Their boats are just above," the latter explained. "We are to overtake them, and all proceed up the river together."

Around a little bend we found them waiting for us. They had two barges, long, graceful and beautiful, similar to the canoe of the American Indian in shape, but propelled by slender oars in the hands of tall, youthful oarsmen of bare arms and heads, and fair, smooth faces. Near the center of each craft there was a sail of the simplest banner form, white but embroidered with the blue flower of the Prince's domain. Truly they seemed to us as an integral part of the world about them.

Mr. Sturritt, who had hitherto remained silent, leaned over to me and murmured :

"Look—er—at them, and—and then at us. We're not very—that is—attractive, while they—why it's just as if they were condensed—I should say—er—materialized, as it were, from the elements."

And Chauncey Gale :

"Better food than tablets, just to look at them, eh, Bill?"

"Sustenance for the soul," said Ferratoni.

XXVIII.

A HARBOR OF FORGOTTEN DREAMS.

OCT. 5. For seven days we have ascended this silent, flowing river, and to-night we rest in the palace of the Prince. At least we call him the Prince, though Ferratoni has explained to us that the word hardly carries the thought as conveyed to him. One whom the others follow and emulate, he thinks would be more exact, but this would mean prince, too, in our acceptation of the word, and so "Prince" he has become to us, and we would not wish for a better title for this fair serene youth, whose unvexed spirit and gentle sway of those about him have wrought a spell upon us all.

We have enjoyed his bounteous hospitality. and often he has traveled in our boat, conversing with Ferratoni, who has translated to us. I have made no previous record, as I desired first to get some definite impression of this new-found country and its people. What their impression of *us* has been it would not be easy to say.

I am not surprised that we have awakened in them a vague wonder and uneasiness rather than ad-

miration. At least Ferratoni says that this is the case. Our boat with its propeller has been examined with what seemed to me a mingling of mild curiosity and respect, and I think with very little idea of adopting its plans or processes. Its unbeautiful lines and the jar of its propeller would not accord with their placid and graceful lives. Our various instruments and our watches they regard with something akin to fear. Perhaps like our ancestors they consider them the result of witchery. When our balloon bag which preceded us was explained to them, as well as our adventures since leaving the Billowcrest, they showed little interest, and certainly found no pleasure in any episode of this somewhat turbulent period. The picture of Chauncey Gale being jerked and battered through a snow-drift did not, as to us, give joy, now that it was all over, and Gale's neck and limbs still properly adjusted. To them it was a distressing, because unbeautiful, incident. Something to be deplored quietly and forgotten quickly.

For the people of this secluded land, if we may judge by those we have seen, are all grace, all repose, all serenity of demeanor. Ambition and achievement—of such kind at least as we know and prize—seem foreign to their lives. They do not venture—or very rarely—beyond the violet boundaries, even during the long summer day. The re-

gion without—the Land of the Silent Cold—is to them the country of the dead.

Any lingering doubt I may have cherished that my lost uncle had found harbor here has been destroyed by the fact that they have no knowledge of the world without. Something of its existence seems to have been dimly known to them by tradition, and perhaps through vague mental impressions, but heretofore no word from those beyond the great outer barrier has ever come to them. They have speculated very dreamily upon the matter—even more so than we have upon the inhabitants of other planets—and have made as little attempt to reach them. When we came nearer to their zone of vibration the Prince and his sister, who it seems are the high priests of this peculiar development, were able to establish some sort of communication with Ferratoni, whose mental adjustment is less foreign to them than ours. But it was an imperfect chord—a poor connection as we would say—and not until the Prince and Ferratoni were face to face and palm to palm was the result definite and tangible.

Their progress, such as it is, has been along lines totally different from those of our people. They resemble the Orientals in some respects—or at least the idea we have of the Orientals of a long ago time. From what I have seen I judge that their mechani-

cal appliances are as those of a far antiquity. Beautiful, indeed, but to a people like us valuable only as curios. To this, however, there appears to be one exception. The Prince has to-day explained to Ferratoni a new process, invented by himself and his serene sister, the Princess of the Lilled Hills, for dispelling darkness. It seems to be a large plate of metal (probably a sort of yellow aluminum, which we at first took for gold and is the only metal we have seen thus far), and this is arranged to receive, by induction, electric waves from the Aurora Australis, radiating them again in the form of a continuous glow. At least, it is expected to do so—we do not understand that it has been perfected as yet, and as we are to see it later it is more than likely that Ferratoni and Gale will be able to improve it greatly. It appears to be the one real mechanical attempt of this languid race—the child of their one great necessity—and the Prince believes that when perfected it will strengthen their people and give them longer life.

As it is, they are enervated by the long summer day, and depleted still further by the long night that follows. When the first vigor of youth wanes, and often before, they pass quickly out of life, and usually, the Prince tells us, without pain. They regard Gale as old—and Mr. Sturritt as a veritable patriarch.

The contrast between them and us is very great.

Between Chauncey Gale and the Prince it is worth going far to see. The one, all languorous grace and spiritual repose; the other, all nerve force and vigor, all action and muscle and overflowing energy.

At least, the latter applied to Gale a few days ago. The spell of quiet content that lies upon this land has possessed him now, somewhat, as it has the others. Like us, he is willing to rest after our hard battle with the snowdrifts—to sail without question, almost without comment along these peaceful shores.

“They don’t seem to need homes and firesides, nor Johnnie’s missionary work in this country,” he remarked to-day, after a long silence. Then we both grew sad, remembering that we had received no word from the vessel for so long. The bell of the telephone rang a little yesterday, and we thought there was a sound of mingled words in the receiver, but nothing intelligible. The Prince, when the nature and use of the invention was explained to him, regarded us with what seemed a mild added wonder, as well as pity, that we should need such an affair when we already have, each within his head, a far better means of communication if we would but develop it.

There are trees along the banks now—curious semi-tropical trees, most of them—and the violets have been replaced here by a multitude of more gor-

geous blossoms. Dwellings and people we saw to-day for the first time. The people congregate it would seem—the result of the long night—and there are no dwellers of the fields, save in midsummer. Then they inhabit tents until the harvests, which the warm, untilled earth bountifully provides for them, are gathered. Such as we have seen were collected along the shore to see us pass. There was no eager curiosity or excitement. Some, indeed, slowly waved their arms or banners as we approached, but this I take it was more as a tribute to the Prince than a greeting to the strangers.

Their houses, like everything else of this unvexed land, appear to have grown, rather than to have been built, and are essentially a part of the landscape. Whatever the contour of the location the house conforms to it. Many are against hillsides, and are built in terrace form, with flowers at the top of each story, forming, as it were, a garden for the next. They are for the most part laid up of unhewn stone, logs, limbs, and even interwoven brush. Frequently some surface of the living rock, or a huge boulder, or a growing tree may become a part of, and blend into, the habitation. It is not always easy to tell where nature ends and artifice begins, or even to distinguish some of the humbler dwellings at first glance.

The terrace form prevails more than any other it

seems; so much so that Gale has conferred on this race the name of "Terrace Dwellers," which effort we regard as more of a success than some of his former attempts at nomenclature. Even when the home is built upon a level spot the lower story usually extends and forms a floral garden for the one above.

Flowers there are, everywhere—many that we seem to recognize, but many more that we have not seen. From what the Prince tells Ferratoni, I gather that while they last, every ceremonial of whatever sort, is a great feast of flowers.

The fact that my camera was not on board when we took our premature flight into the unknown is a matter of deep regret to me, for I would fain preserve some more permanent impressions of these placid and beautiful shores.

But we have reached the Prince's palace. It is a succession of wonderful terraces, beginning at the river front, and extending back to the hills behind it. Each terrace is supported by a row of slender columns, and on the outer edge of each a carved railing leads to a graceful outside stairway that ascends from one step of flowers to the next. At the summit, on a level with the hills, the last step forms a round colonaded eyrie, on the top of which the sun still lingers. Along the terraces are groups of waiting people who, as we approach, wave tranquilly

their white arms to the Prince. Their dress and attitudes suggest some dim, forgotten land of the East. Us they regard with placid curiosity, yet with a gentle friendliness evident in their faces.

Now, from the wide portal of the lower story, come many down the broad, white steps to greet us. Young are they all, and beautiful—creatures of an unknown world, while from either side troop bare-armed boys and girls, chanting a low, rhythmic melody of welcome.

So are we come at last to the land of my fancy. And a land of fancy indeed it seems to us. A harbor for vanished argosies and forgotten dreams. A port for lost rhymes and strayed melodies—for discarded magic and alchemies long dead. And it is in this enchanted vale that we find once more the shelter of human habitation.

We shall rest to-night with the Prince of the Purple Fields.



THE PALACE OF THE PRINCE.

“A harbor for vanished argosies and forgotten dreams.”—Page 242.

XXIX.

A LAND OF THE HEART'S DESIRE.

OCT. 12. This is the land of harmony. Here, shut in from the outer world by the crystal walls of the ages, rhythmic vibrations of the universe have blossomed in a fair, frail, almost supernatural life. Here the ideals of Ferratoni are the realities of the daily round, while the dreams of Edith Gale are but as the play language of little children.

Here, shut away from the greed and struggle of the life we know—few in numbers and simple in their material needs, fragile and brief in their span of physical existence and plunged for half the year into a sunless period of contemplation—the lives of the people have linked themselves with the sun and stars, with the woods and fields, with the winds and waters, and with each other, in one rare, universal chord.

It is the natural result of the long periods of sun and darkness. The polar night binds them in closer sympathy, even as it did those of the Billow-crest, while during the long sunny day they have only to bask in the sun and dream, and let the fecund

soil provide amply for their wants. There is no need of struggle—no effort, save to retain life, if I may apply that term to this languorous melody of existence wherein greed, jealousy, vanity and the other elements of discord find no place.

There is no old age here—our most frequent excuse for greed. No necessity for a life of heavy toil to provide for a ghastly period when all save physical want has perished.

Indeed, there is little effort here of any sort. They are not even obliged to talk, for their minds are as open books, and there is not, as with us, the need of many words to cloud and diffuse a few poor thoughts, that in the beginning were hardly worth while.

Truth here is not a luxury—a thing produced with difficulty and therefore conserved for special occasions—but an abounding necessity, like air and water. Concealment, ever the first step toward sorrow, is impossible.

Love flowers naturally and where all may see. Marriage is union, and separation unknown. Joy to one is answered in the bosom of many, and grief is the minor chord that stirs mournfully the heart of a multitude. Verily is it a “Land of the Heart’s Desire,”

“Where nobody ever grows old, and crafty and wise—
Where nobody ever grows false and bitter of tongue.”

If I seem to have waxed poetic in speaking of these people, it is because poetry is the language and breath of their race. Even Chauncey Gale has imbibed something of the pervading spirit, and adapted his phraseology to the conditions.

"The chant of the trolley and the song of the lawn-mower are heard not nor needed," he said to me this morning, as we looked from our high terrace down on the dream world below.

I speak of it as morning, but there is no morning now. It is always afternoon—the afternoon of a June day, before the gray dust and the withering heat of summer have begun their blight. We have been here a week and we would roam no farther. The world, the vessel, the crew—even Edith Gale—all seem as a page of some half-forgotten tale—something of another and long-ago existence in which we have no further part. The spell of the lotus is upon us. The lives of the lotus-eaters have become our lives.

We have laid off our travel-stained dress, shaved our beards, and become in appearance even as those about us. Ferratoni is as one to the manor born. Mr. Sturritt might have been a seer and a high priest from childhood. His (to them) extreme age has commanded their wonder and reverence, and his pink dessert lozenges are highly regarded as a new and most delightful confection. Altogether he is

in high favor, ranking next, it would seem, to Ferratoni, who, as the favorite of the Prince, and interpreter for the rest of us, is exalted somewhat unduly. As for Gale, whose physical and facial lines are perhaps most at variance with those about us, he has put himself on low diet in order to train down to a poetic basis, and goes about reciting verses, remembered from childhood, to slender youths and fair, reclining women, who listen drowsily as they bathe in the life-giving rays of the returning sun. Yesterday I heard him repeating "Mary's Little Lamb" to a group of languid listeners. It did not matter—they do not understand his words, and his thought vibrations are, I suspect, altogether too highly tensioned for this deliberate race.

Now that there is no more night the people live out of doors. There are no regular hours for sleep or food. Soft-footed, bare-limbed boys bring viands at call, while æolian harps, yielding pillows, and the perfume of flowers everywhere woo to somnolence and repose. Our food consists mainly of preserved fruits, also the meat of a curious, silken-haired goat which these people possess, and sometimes that of the strange, leaping rabbit creature—these being their only animals. The flesh of birds and fishes, however, is plentiful, and to these things are added many preparations of their chief cereal, a sort of rice, which yields abundantly each

year, without planting. Our sweets are from the sap of a tree, even finer and more delicate of flavor than our northern maple. Wine we have from the wild grapes that ripen later in great abundance.

Within the palace I find many curious little lamps and torches,—their provision against the long night. The walls and floors are draped with yielding fabrics, woven from the silken fleece of the goat, and from the long hair of the “skipteroon.” Of feather work, too, I have seen some delicate examples. Their looms for weaving, their implements for harvesting, their utensils for preparing food, are all of the simplest and most primitive form, such as our earliest ancestors might have employed, and as may be in use to-day in lands where mechanism has made little or no progress. Their one attempt in this direction is their invention for dispelling darkness, and this has not yet been shown to us, for the complaisant Prince has been quiescent since our arrival, and we have fallen into the way of it all, and are willing to procrastinate, and to keep on procrastinating while the circling sun dispenses the anodyne of eternal afternoon.

It is not strange that like the nations of the Incas these people should be worshippers of the sun. To them comes the fullest realization of its life-giving glory, and the joyless stagnation of the death-breathing dark. We who sleep through

much of the sun's absence come naturally to regard it somewhat as a useful and not always agreeable adjunct to our lives. Yet even we, after days of dull weather—black nights and murky mornings—welcome joyously the return of the life-giver, while to these people it would be strange indeed if the great luminary had not become at least the shining symbol of Infinity. The terrace form of their dwelling is, I think, suggested by the sun's gradual circling ascent and descent of the sky, and from the topmost step or story they assemble to bid it joyous welcome and reverential farewell. The world itself here appears to be a sort of terrace, the first step of which we ascended when we reached the Violet Fields. The next is the approach to the land ruled over by the Prince's serene sister, whom we are soon to see, for though we are loth to depart from this pleasant vale, we are daily required by a mental message from her to proceed farther on our journey.

To-morrow, therefore, or the next day, or the day after, we must ascend still higher this enchanted river and "pause not unduly, nor idly linger"—so her august message runs—until we shall arrive at the palace of the Lady of the Lilied Hills.

XXX.

THE LADY OF THE LILIES.

AND now, indeed, we are in the land of anodyne and oblivion. Once more we dream and forget, and the palace of the Prince dims out and fades, even as the barges that brought us drift back down the tide and disappear in the distant blue. Here is the world's enchanted and perfumed casket, and here within it lies the world's rarest jewel of sorcery—the Princess of the Lilled Hills.

We have been here but a brief time—I no longer keep a record of the days—and we are bound hand and foot, as it were, by the spell of this Circe of the South. In the first moment that we were ushered into her presence, and beheld her in her white robe of state, embroidered with the pale yellow flower of her kingdom, whatever remained to us of the past slipped away like water through the fingers. Chauncey Gale forgot that he had a yacht, and both of us that he had a daughter. Mr. Sturritt forgot everything but his packages of pink lozenges, which he reverentially laid at her feet, thereby earning her cordial acknowledgments and our bitter jealousy.

Ferratoni, however, was not long at a loss. He could converse with her, and it became evident almost from the start that he did not care to translate either fully or literally. He cut out, and revised, and stumbled. She detected his difficulty, of course, and seemed to reprove him. Then he gave up translating altogether, and the rest of us sat there, simply staring at her, until Gale got himself together and recited the "Burning Deck," while I suffered in spirit because reciting did not seem to be quite what I wanted to do, and I could remember no other tricks to perform.

I finally prevailed upon Ferratoni to tell her that it was I who had conceived the expedition, whereupon Gale hastily claimed credit for having made it possible, while Mr. Sturritt—Sturritt the timid and unassuming—boldly stated that without him and his tablets we should have perished by the wayside. It was altogether distressing to hear them.

When we were through, she looked fondly at Ferratoni, and then, still tenderly regarding him, expressed thanks to all of us with a fervency that was gratifying to him no doubt, but that to the rest of us seemed a poor reward.

She added, presently, that as I was interested in the central point of the kingdom—the South Pole, of course—and that as Gale was interested in the people's homes and firesides, and Mr.

Sturritt in the matter of their food, she would have us escorted about with a view to our observation of these things, but that Ferratoni, whose life and aims were not so widely different from her own, would remain with her to discuss the problems in which they were mutually interested.

Perhaps she did not put it just in this way, but Ferratoni did in his translation; then they both turned away and forgot our existence. We were conducted outside, ere long, and there was a barge at the door into which it was indicated that we should enter.

We did not do so, however. The boatmen were in no haste and neither were we. There is no haste in this land. We lay down by the shore and looked serenely to the south where rose a lofty terraced temple, the top of which we had observed from a great distance. We had been told it was their chief temple of worship, and located exactly in the center of the sun's daily circuit. Resting thus on the earth's axis, it became for us the outward and material symbol of our objective point—of my life's ambition. It was the South Pole!

And now that we are here and it rises before us, the eagerness to set foot upon that magic point—to scale and stand triumphant on the apex of the pole itself, as it were, has passed.

"So that is the South Pole," murmurs Gale.

"Well, I never would have recognized it if I'd seen it any place else. Let's don't be in too big a hurry to get to it, Nick."

"No," I answer, "suppose we wait awhile. Perhaps if we wait long enough the South Pole will come to *us*."

For there can be no eagerness in this land. It would be wholly out of place. Neither are we acutely jealous of Ferratoni. Acuteness would be out of place also.

And so we drowse in the fragrance of the lilies, and soft-eyed, soft-voiced people come and sing to us, while the barge waits and becomes a picture on the tide.

And then there falls silence, and it is as if the world and the palace slept, and so would sleep until the wakening kiss.

XXXI.

THE POLE AT LAST.

NOVEMBER (). At the top of the Temple of the Sun.

I do not know the precise date, or the hour. Our watches have long since stopped, and there has been neither the desire nor the need to wind them. In a land where the sun slips round the sky, and for half a year no night cometh, the proper measure of time is of little matter.

Neither have I continued the record of these notes, for I thought each day to visit this spot, and so waited. In the light of the Lily Princess we have lingered and drowsed. From the peace of her pleasant palace we have not cared to stray. And she has smiled kindly upon us all, though from the first it has been evident that her joy lies in Ferratoni, and that, in the princess, he too has found at last the ideal—the perfect spirit vibration that completes the chord of souls.

We have become glad of this and rejoice in his happiness. That is, we have rejoiced as much as

anybody ever rejoices in this halcyon land. We have been peacefully and limpidly content, and their serene bliss has been our compensation.

Yet there have been other rewards. We have mingled with the fair people of the court and found something of the bliss of their untroubled lives.

Also, we have learned somewhat of their converse—that is, we have learned to imagine that we know what they are thinking and saying, while they have learned, or imagine they have learned, about us, too; and in this land to imagine that you have learned these things is much the same as if you had really done so, for in a place where life is reduced to a few simple principles, and there is neither the reason nor the wish to plan, or discuss, or quarrel about anything, what you say and think, or what they say and think in reply, cannot be wide of the mark in any case. As with time, exactness, or the lack of it, does not matter. Indeed, nothing matters much in this balmy vale. Linger on a lilled bank in the sun—with—with any one of these gentle people, life becomes a soothing impression which minuteness and detail would only mar.

We have learned, too, though rather vaguely, something of the customs of the race, and the life of those who dwell beyond the palace gates. They are not a numerous people and their ways are primitive. Nature provides their food, and their gar-

ments are few and simple. Only the construction of their dwellings calls for any serious outlay of toil, and in this they unite as in a festival until the labor is complete. Their harvests are conducted in the same manner, and in these things they are not widely different from our pioneer ancestors, who exchanged labors of the field, and merrily joined in their house-raising.

Like the people of the Incas, the Antarcticans have no money and no need of it. The lands are held in common, and the harvests yield more than enough for all. Great storehouses hold the surplus, from which any one may be provided in time of need. Famine, war, and the complications of law are unknown. Indeed, the necessity of law here seems slight. For in a land where there can be no concealment, crime must languish and only such laws result as find natural and willing observance.

Although what we regarded as life is very brief here, there is no dread of that which we know as death. Death in fact appears to have no real empire in this land, for Ferratoni assures us that the disembodied intelligence still vibrates to many of those clothed in the physical life, until it passes altogether out of range in its progress toward that great central force, which they believe to be the sun. To Ferratoni this is no surprise. To the rest of us it is a matter of vague wonder, which we have ac-

cepted as we have accepted everything else of this mystic land and race.

There are no schools. Education appears to be absorbed through their peculiar faculty of mental communication or "silent speech," which develops in childhood, and is now almost universal. A few appear to be unable to master it, though their number is much less in proportion to the race than is the number of those who with us are lacking in the musical sense. In fact there seems to be a close analogy, or possibly a relation between mental speech and the musical vibration—those lacking the ear for tune and melody, they tell us, being deficient in the mental perception as well. The number of these is decreasing, however, with each generation, and in a land where the whole atmosphere breathes harmony the false notes must blend out in time, and the chord at last become universal and complete. There is a written language—a sort of symbolic ideograph—but with the perfection of their mental attainments, it has fallen gradually into disuse, and is now mainly employed in ornamental decoration, and for preserving the songs and records of the people.*

* In no place does Mr. Chase give an example of the Antarctic speech or writing. Even the native word for their deity or their country is avoided, whether by intention or oversight cannot now be ascertained.

Of the latter we know but little. They are in the keeping of the Princess, who, since our arrival, has been altogether too happy in the present to go delving back into the myths of her ancestors. We are told that the first Princess came from the sun, and in this, too, the Antarcticans somewhat resemble the people of the Incas. In fact, they have so much in common with the ancient Peruvians that we might suspect a common origin, were it not for their difference of color, and even this becomes less marked with each round of their ascending deity.

We are told further that when the first Princess came to the earth she brought so much of the sunlight with her that the great luminary was dark for three days, and that all the light there was came from the heaven-sent being. It is said she found the people a benighted and unsceptred race, even then ready to destroy the life of a gentle youth who had risen up among them as a teacher and a prophet. Overawed by her glory, they had dragged him before her for final judgment. But when the Princess had looked upon the fair youth, and searched with her great radiance his innermost heart, she had laid her arms about his shoulders and declared him her spouse, beloved of heaven, and to be honored only next to herself. And when she had wedded him there before all the people, the sun had suddenly burst forth and laid its golden blessing upon them,

and they had lived and reigned and enlightened the race for many years. And their land she had called the Land of the Sloping Sun, and divided it into the Lilled Hills and the Purple Fields, and over the one the eldest daughter, and over the other the eldest son of each generation had ruled.

Two thousand long nights have elapsed, they tell us, since the coming of the first Sun Princess, and though the race has never grown numerous or hardy, it has become gentle and content, and human life has not been destroyed for many generations.

They are deeply opposed to what we know as progress,* believing it conducive only to discontent and evils innumerable. They regard with sorrowful distrust our various mechanical contrivances. They are not surprised to learn that men are still

* In comparing Mr. Chase's record of the customs and characteristics of the Antarctic race with those of the ancient Peruvians, we find in Prescott (*The Conquest*) a paragraph which reveals still further the striking similarity between the two races. Prescott says :

“Ambition, avarice, the love of change, the morbid spirit of discontent, those passions which most agitate the minds of men, found no place in the bosom of the Peruvian. The very condition of his being seemed to be at war with change. He moved on in the same unbroken circle in which his fathers had moved before him, and in which his children were to follow. It was the object of the Incas to infuse into their subjects a spirit of tranquillity, a perfect acquiescence in the established order of things.”

condemned to death in our country, for the last man so condemned here was convicted of contriving a means to propel a craft without oars—in fact, a sail. It was a poor sail at that, and of little value save as an ornament. I said we might punish a man in our country, too, for inventing such a sail, though I thought we would hardly kill him. And then we learned that this man wasn't killed either, for the Princess of that time, being still very young and unmarried, had, in accordance with divine precedent, looked upon the inventor and loved him, and granted him her hand in marriage—for this, it appears, was their one method of royal pardon, and certainly a pleasant one for the inventor. The sail, she told them, had been sent from the sun, so that the winds of the fields might aid them, which was all very beautiful, though it seems that the sun might have sent a better sail.

It was the same Princess and her consort who began this great central temple in honor of their happiness, and who established as universal throughout the nation the “Pardon of Love”—that forever after no one who truly loved, and was so beloved in return, could perish by violence, and no one has so perished for more than five hundred of their long nights. The invention of the present Princess and her brother—the dark-dispeller—has been explained to them as also a gift of the sun, to aid it in van-

quishing the long night, though, as it has thus far never been made to work and is regarded by Gale as hopeless, it would seem that in this case, as in the other, the sun might have sent a better one.

This temple, however, is flawless. It stands on an island in the midst of a lake, or rather a widening of the river, and is, as before noted, located exactly at the point where the sun, during its daily circuit, appears always equidistant, above the horizon.* It is therefore on the earth's southern axis, and represents, to us, the South Pole.

Each day we have come to the borders of the lake and viewed this wonderful edifice from afar. When I say "each day," I mean about as often as that, if time were divided in the old way, and when I say "we" I refer to Chauncey Gale, Mr. Sturritt and myself, also to the Princess and Ferratoni when they chose to honor us, and to such others of the court as cared to follow.

We have meant to cross over to this island, but we could come any time, and when we did come

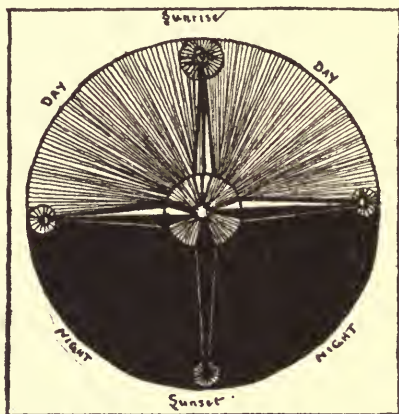
* It is noticeable that Mr. Chase furnishes us with no clue as to the astronomical knowledge of the Antarctic people. We are left to surmise that they believe the earth to be a flat circle about which the sun travels, instead of a revolving orb such as we know it to be. Many other things which seem of importance are also overlooked. We would be glad to know more of the yellow metal once referred to, and something of their minerals and precious stones, which are nowhere mentioned.

we would have to ascend the long Ladder of the Sun—the steps leading to the top—so it was not well to hurry. To-day, however, is a sort of ceremonial—the end, or somewhere near it, of the first period of their long day, which they divide into four parts, as we do our lunar periods. The Princess and Ferratoni and a train of followers are coming, so we have set out ahead, and are resting here on the upper or topmost terrace, awaiting them.

There are four of these terraces, and they are very high. They represent the four divisions of the day period—the Flowers, the Fruitage, the Harvest, and the Farewell. They are connected by long stairs—two series, on opposite sides of the temple—one for the sun to climb, and one by which it is supposed to descend after the midsummer solstice. As I suspected, the people build their habitations to conform, not only to the earth's surface, but also to the solar phases, and this temple is their great architectural culmination and model.

In the center of the upper terrace there is carved a huge dial, or calendar, somewhat resembling that used by the Aztecs. It is divided into four equal parts, and two of these into smaller divisions by rays from a central sun, each ray signifying a solar circuit—one hundred and eighty-two and one-half such divisions representing their entire summer day. The other half of the dial is left unillumi-

nated, so to speak, thus to signify the long night. In this dial the point of beginning indicates the direction opposite to that from which we came. Here, also, ends the stairway by which the sun is supposed to climb, and from this direction, out of the unknown and uninhabited lands beyond, a fair river flows into the central lake. Between two



THE ANTARCTIC CALENDAR. RUDE SKETCH FROM MR. CHASE'S NOTE-BOOK.

hills in the far distance its waters touch the sky, thus forming a narrow gateway on the horizon. And through this come the earliest rays of morning after the period of darkness. The first returning gleams are caught and borne to the waiting people by the ripple of the inward flowing stream. And for this they have named it the "River of Living Dawn."

Directly across from this is the sun's descending stairway, and there also, and flowing out of the lake, is the river by which we came. It, too, has a horizon gate, and through it, when its last half-circle is complete, linger the feeble rays of the parting sun. So they have named this the "River of Coming Dark," and down its still current are sent those to whom night and cold no longer matter.

XXXII.

AN OFFERING TO THE SUN.

"WHICH way is north?" asked Gale, as we looked down at the huge compass-like carving.

"All ways," I said. "We are at the end of South, here. The center of that diagram is the spot we set out to reach. It is the South Pole."

Gale reflected on this a moment, and then with something of the old spirit said:

"I'd like to know how anybody is ever going to lay out an addition here! Latitudes and longitudes, and directions, and hemispheres, all mixed up, and no difference in east and west fronts, or afternoon sun." He paused a moment, and seemed reflecting; then he grew even more like the Gale of earlier days. "Say," he added suddenly, "but wouldn't this temple make a great hotel, though! Center of everything, and sun in every window once in twenty-four hours. Do you know, if it wasn't for Ferratoni, I'd try to make some sort of a—a matrimonial alliance with the Princess, and get her interested in developing this country and stirring things up. I'd pitch that jim-crow electric

apparatus, that don't work, into this lake, and I'd put a light on top of this pyramid that would show from here to the snow-line. Then I'd run an elevator up here, and have trolley cars connecting all over, and steam launches going up and down these rivers." He paused for breath, and then his face saddened. "But what's the use, Nick?" he said mournfully. "How is anybody going to do business here? Nobody wants any homes and firesides, or trolleys, or steamboats, and if they did, they haven't got any money to pay for anything with. Think of it! Not a dollar in the whole country! Not a nickel! Not a red penny!"

It was as the flare of the expiring candle. He ceased. The spell of the country once more lay upon him. The ways of progress such as he had known seemed as far off and forgotten as the cold northern pole beneath us.

Mr. Sturritt looked sad, too, and shook his head silently. There seemed no need of his food preparations in a land where people never journeyed afar, and had ample time to consume the ample stores so lavishly provided by nature, and in such uncondensed forms. Like the rest of us, he would forget, and let the world go by.

We loitered back to the edge of the terrace and looked down. Far below, the Princess and her court were just arriving. We watched them alight from

their barges and ascend the stairway that led to the first terrace. They were a fair throng, and the sight from above was beautiful in the extreme. In front there came a troop of singing children with garlands of flowers. Just behind these walked the Princess in her robe of state, and by her side, our companion, Ferratoni, her guest of honor. After them followed the people of the court, young men and maids—all laden with great floral bonds, festooned from one couple to the next in a mighty double chain. There was no solemnity. All were chanting gaily. As they reached the top of each stairway, they paused to face the sun and unite in a jubilant chorus. Truly, I thought, theirs is a religion of joy and good-will.

“I’m sorry, now, we didn’t wait and come up with the crowd,” said Gale. “Still, we get a better view by not being in it. But will you just look at Tony! Talk about catching on! Why, if I didn’t know better, I’d say this was a wedding performance and that Tony had the star part.”

They were near enough now for us to see that Ferratoni’s face was lighted with smiles, and that the Princess, too, looked very happy.

“It is hardly that, yet,” I said, “but I think we need not be surprised at anything. Though such an alliance, I suppose, would require some special dispensation or sanction of the sun.”

"Yes," assented Gale, "and, by the way, Nick, who is that little yellow-haired girl that is setting up to you—the one that sings a good deal and plays on that little bandolin arrangement—and that other one, Bill, that dark-eyed one who walks about with you so much, holding hands, and wondering how old you could live to be, if you really tried?"

I made no immediate reply, and Mr. Sturritt showed languid confusion.

"I—that is——" he began, "she—she is——"

"I think," I interposed, "she is a cousin to that very delightful little auburn-haired creature, who sits all day at the feet of our Admiral, listening to "How Doth the Little Busy Bee" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

"Nick," said Gale, "if anything should happen that we ever did get out of this snap, and back to—to people—the yacht, and Biff, and Johnnie, I mean—I suppose it would be just as well not to mention some of the things that happen down here. They wouldn't quite understand the conditions, you see—the—the atmosphere, as the artists say—the poetry of it, you know. You wouldn't want to say anything, yourself——"

He was interrupted at this point by the arrival on our terrace of the singing children. I had no opportunity to reply, but I did not at once join very heartily in the ceremonies.

The latter were very simple, and consisted of little more than a continuance of the marching and singing, with a pause at short intervals to shout a great pæan to their divinity. Then there ensued a wonderfully graceful dance, and after this a marvellous floral decoration of the entire temple, within and without. In this the Princess took but a brief initiatory part, and presently, when the upper terrace was finished, most of her followers descended to the work below, leaving with her only her ladies-in-waiting, a few gentlemen of the court, and ourselves.

We reclined among the flowers, and for a time there was a silence, broken only by the distant singing voices of those still busy below. It seemed a sort of benediction after the offering, and then for some reason there came upon me a feeling like that when at the opera the curtain descends and the chorus dies into the distance; the feeling that something is over and completed—that something new and different is about to begin.

XXXIII.

THE TOUCH OF LIFE.

THE music below grew fainter and died. Those with us upon the terrace remained silent, awaiting the pleasure of the Princess. When she spoke at last it was to Ferratoni, and then I noticed for the first time that he had brought, or caused to be brought, a little case which I recognized as one of his telephones. We had known that for the entertainment of the Princess he had been experimenting with his materials, and we realized that he was about to demonstrate from the elevation of the temple the practicability of his invention. Remembering what we had been told of the national prejudice against mechanical progress, I momentarily doubted the wisdom of such an exhibition, but reflected that with the approval of the Princess the result could hardly be otherwise than pleasant. Those who remained with us seemed also to encourage the experiment, and showed some interest as to the outcome.

They were those of the inner household. Among

them were the three to whom Chauncey Gale, Mr. Sturritt and myself had paid some slight social attention (the merest courtesies, indeed, as courtesies go in that land) since our arrival in the Lilied Hills.

Ferratoni now arranged the telephone apparatus and adjusted it carefully, explaining to us, meantime, that he had constructed another which he had left at the palace below, whence a little party of those returning would presently communicate with us. When all was ready, he touched the annunciator bell, but there came no response. Evidently those who were to answer had not yet reached the palace. We waited a little in expectant silence—then once more he touched the bell. Still no response—our friends at court were proceeding but leisurely, as was their wont. Indeed a mental communication just then established the fact that they had paused for refreshments in the palace gardens. I thought Ferratoni looked a little annoyed. He was anxious, I suppose, to please the Princess, though the latter showed no impatience. Refreshments and pausing were the peaceful characteristics of her gentle race.

While we waited I found myself recalling some of the former times when the little telephone had brought messages from the unseen. I recalled the first trial, when we were frozen in the pack, and Edith Gale and I had carried it to the top of the

lonely berg, and so listened to Ferratoni's mysterious message from the ship—the message all now could understand. I remembered, too, the chill waiting on the top of the Pacemaker when voices from the Billowcrest heartened me and gave me comfort and hope. And then there came the recollection of the weary days when, toiling down the great white way, we had been cheered and encouraged by the voices of those behind, and of the desolate nights when I had found peace and repose in the soothing influence of "Old Brown Cows."

Recalling these things dreamily, I was almost as much startled as the listless ones about us, when suddenly on the little telephone in our midst there came a sharp returning ring. Not a timid and hesitating signal, as from one unused and half afraid, but emphatic, eager and prolonged. There was something about it that thrilled me, and I saw Chauncey Gale suddenly sit upright. Ferratoni, however, quickly handed the transmitter to the Princess, and held the receiver to her ear. But as she listened there came into her face only a strange, puzzled expression, and she did not answer. Instead, she returned the transmitter to Ferratoni, who now held the receiver to his own ear. For a moment only, then hastily turning, and with eager, outstretched hands he held the telephone complete toward Chauncey Gale and me!

We grabbed for it as children scramble for a toy. It was an unseemly display to those serene ones about us, and in a brief instant must have damaged their good opinion of us, and their regard. We did not think of that, and we did not care. We knew that in that telephone were voices for us only—voices long silent to us—at times almost forgotten,—but that now, from far across the snowy wastes and scented fields, were calling us to awake, and remember, and reply.

I seized the receiver. Gale, who had managed to get hold of the transmitter, commenced shouting in it.

“Hello! Hello, Johnnie! Hello! Hello! Why don’t you answer?” Then, suddenly realizing that I held the receiver, he snatched it to his own ear, but not before I had caught a few brief joyous words in the voice of Edith Gale.

“Yes, it’s us!” he called frantically. “All right, yes!—Yes, as well and happy as—that is, of course we’re awful homesick!—I mean not suffering any.—Yes, warm, and fine country!—Oh, yes, nice people!—Girls? Oh, yes.—N—no, I don’t think *you’d* think so—some people might, but we don’t. Matter of taste, you know.—How’s the ship?—That’s good.—Biff, too?—What? Oh, ice out of the bay. Bully!—No—it didn’t work till just now. Too low down.—Why, on top of the South Pole.—

Ha, ha, yes.—No. Temple of worship.—Yes, high! High as Washington monument!—Why didn't we try it before?—Why, we—that is—we've been busy—very busy!—Doing? Us? Oh, why, we've been—that is—we—we've been studying habits—and customs—customs of the people.—Yes, interesting.—Yes."

I had been so absorbed in Gale's one-sided dialogue that I had forgotten the presence of those about us. He ceased speaking now, for a moment, evidently listening to a lengthier communication. Recalling myself, I glanced about at the others, wondering how much or how little of it they had comprehended. Probably very little, yet the effect upon them had been startling. They had witnessed our sudden transformation from people not greatly different to themselves into what must have appeared to them unholy barbarians—wild untamed savages, awakened to a fierce and to them brutal frenzy by the unseen electric summons. In their faces was a horror and condemnation never before written there. An awakening, indeed, had followed the galvanic touch. Gale, all unconscious of this, now broke loose again.

"No, we haven't done anything yet in that line. They don't need any missionary work here, or homes, but they need everything else. I was just telling Nick a scheme a while ago. We felt a little

discouraged, then, because we couldn't get word from the ship, but I'm waked up now, and we'll make things hum. We'll get franchises from the government for electric lights and trolley lines, and steamboat traffic, and we'll build some factories, and I'll put a head-light on this temple, and an elevator inside, and we'll lay out additions in all directions. Vacant property here as far as you can see, and just going to waste. Of course we'll have to fix up some easy way to get people over the ice-wall, and run sledge trains over the snow between here and Bottle Bay, like they do in the Klondike. It may take a year or two to get the place opened up, but we can do it, and when we do, it'll be the greatest spot on earth. We didn't know just how we were going to get out of here before, though we haven't worried any, but now you and Biff can take the yacht back to New York and make up a big expedition. You'll have to bring a lot of stuff we didn't have this time, and a lot of money—small money—silver change, and nickels. These jays haven't got any, and don't know what it is, but it won't take 'em long to find out when they find they can get it for some of their stuff and give it back for trolley rides. Nick and I'll just camp right up here on this temple, and we'll plan the whole thing, so——"

But Ferratoni, who had risen, at this point laid his hand on Gale's arm. I did not hear what he

whispered, but Gale suddenly handed me the apparatus, and they drew apart. I was anxious to talk with Edith, but I had been taking note of those about us, and I had rather more anxiety just then concerning developments close at hand. Gale and Ferratoni stood before the Princess and the others assembled near. The Princess began speaking and Ferratoni translated to Gale, whose knowledge of the Antarctic converse was an uncertain quantity. Mr. Sturritt and I drew into the circle to listen. Perhaps not for a thousand years had there been such a turbulence of spirit in the Land of the Sloping Sun.

The Princess and the others, Ferratoni said, had been able to understand, through him, something of Mr. Gale's plans, as briefly outlined to his daughter. As a people they were opposed to such innovations, and they earnestly deprecated the state of mind and sudden change of attitude occasioned in us by the renewal of the telephone connection with our vessel and friends.

They reasoned, he said, that if a very small thing like the telephone had produced upon us results so manifest, and so unpleasant to behold, they were sure that still larger mechanisms—of the size of a trolley car, for instance—would be a national calamity, and result only in demoralization and ruin. They therefore protested most vigor-

ously against a further pursuit of these schemes, and suggested that even the telephone itself be instantly demolished.

The Princess, personally, was not opposed to any appliance that would benefit her people without destroying their lives or repose of spirit, but the radical changes contemplated in the mind of our Admiral were abhorrent to her, and she would not be responsible for our welfare or even our personal safety unless these plans were immediately abandoned. The matter of some new means of dispelling the long dark she would be glad to consider. Even some easier method of ascending the temple might——

But this gave Gale an opportunity to present his case, which he did with considerable force. He made an address in favor of mechanical progress, well worthy of recording here if I could remember it. Ferratoni translated rapidly, and I could see that the Princess and her companion were somewhat impressed. As had been shown by her attempted invention for lighting, she was really more inclined to such advancement than most of her race, while those about her were the staunchest of her followers. She made little reply, however, to Gale's speech, though her general attitude suggested that the matter in it might be taken under advisement. The telephone was not immediately destroyed, and I was now per-

mitted to have a brief and quiet conversation with Edith Gale—a conversation which the reader's imagination will best supply.

At the end I had spoken of the rare beauty and qualities of the Princess and how we were trying to convert her to our way of thinking.

"Is she really so beautiful? And are the others too? Daddy thought I wouldn't care for them——"

"Um—did he? Oh, but you'd love the Princess. She is so beautiful and so—so gentle——"

A pause, then—

"Nicholas!—*Hello! Nicholas!*"

"Yes,"

"I wouldn't try to convert the Princess, if I were you!"

As we prepared to descend to the waiting barges, Gale was inclined to be in good spirits over the prospect ahead. But I noticed that the Princess seemed more disquieted than I had ever seen her, and that Ferratoni, and the others, looked somber and unhappy.

And now, too, for the first time since our arrival, we saw that a storm-cloud had gathered upon the horizon—a blackness that rose swiftly and extinguished the sun.

Quick lightning parted it here and there and the roll of distant thunder came ominously. A portentous dark settled on the lands below us, and the

waters of the lake became spectral. A few drops of rain fell.

A canopy was brought from the temple and lifted above the Princess. Silence came upon us. The smile faded from Gale's features, and Mr. Sturritt's face grew pale and anxious.

For myself, I had the feeling of being a part of some weird half-waking dream, in which fact and fantastic imagery mingled with a sense of heavy foreboding. Only the recent words of Edith Gale lingered as a ray from some far-off beacon.

XXXIV.

THE PARDON OF LOVE.

IN the Antarctic land, news is the one thing that travels fast. Thought still moves with comparative quickness there, and whatever lies in the mind of one is as though put on a bulletin board, to become the property of all.

Through the darkness of the approaching storm we saw before we reached the foot of the stairway the gathering of many torches on the shore beyond. Evidently there was some unusual movement abroad which could not be wholly due to the coming tempest. In the gathering dusk I saw now that the faces of those about us were filled with deep and increasing concern. At the water's edge Ferratoni turned to us and said hurriedly :

“ The people are much aroused at the plans we have discussed on the temple. They believe the innovations proposed would destroy their present mode of life and result in their downfall as a race. They believe, too, that the Sun has darkened in anger, and they have joined it yonder in a great protest against us. The Princess considers it unsafe that

we should cross over until she has pacified them with her presence. She asks that we keep here the smaller barge, and remain for the present in the sanctity of the temple, where harm may not befall us. She will communicate with me mentally, and inform us as to further advisabilities."

We gazed across at the torches that were now crowding to the water's edge. Gale had said that we would make things hum, but he had not counted on the humming beginning with such promptness. A medley of mingled voices and angry shouts was borne to us by the cool air that preceded the coming storm. We could see faces distorted by the torch-flare and strange rage until they had lost all semblance to those of the gentle people we had known. The old savagery of the benighted and unsceptred race that two thousand years before had been eager to destroy the gentle prophet risen among them, and that again long afterwards had sought the life of him who would harness the winds to serve them, was once more abroad, and its cry was for blood.

"But see here, Tony," protested Gale. "We're not going to let the Princess and these friends of ours go over into that mob. I stirred up this racket, and I'll see it through. Any one of us can handle a dozen of those sissies. They might make a set at their own people, but four fellows like us can wade through them like a cyclone."

“Not as they are now,” said Ferratoni. “They are not the people we have known. As for the Princess, she is holy—they will not harm her—and these others have in no way offended. It is wiser to accept the advice of the Princess and remain here. We should only make her task harder by going.”

I had been ready to join with Gale in facing the people beyond the lake, but I realized the wisdom of Ferratoni's words and said nothing. Mr. Sturritt too was silent, though I could see that, as usual, he was “with the Admiral,” in whatever the latter might undertake or agree upon.

The Princess and the others now embarked without further delay. The storm overhead was almost upon us. Lightning was more frequent, and the thunder rolling nearer. Large drops of rain were already falling.

The Princess was first to enter her barge. As she did so, she turned and took both of Ferratoni's hands. Whereupon the three maidens to whom we others had paid some slight attention, likewise turned, and each followed her royal example. Through the mirk a gentle face for a brief instant looked up into mine. Then there came a flash of lightning that turned into an aureola her silken yellow hair. Our attentions had been the merest courtesies, as I have said, but in the instant of blackness that followed I leaned hastily down, and——

What the others did I do not know; I could not see well in the darkness.

We watched them until they reached the other side. The torches crowded thickly to the landing as the barge approached, and a wave of turbulent voices was borne across to us. We saw the torches go swaying to the palace, and a flash of lightning showed them crowding through the gates—the canopy of the Princess borne ahead. Then we retired within the temple, for the storm broke heavily.

It was dark in there, and the air was heavy with the odor of mingled flowers. We groped about until we found something that had steps and cushions on it, where we sat down. We believed it to be the great altar of the sun, which we had been told was so placed in the center of the temple that from every point the sun's rays touched it, and so lingered throughout the long day. It was probably about the safest spot we could find for the present. Then we waited, while the thunder roared and crashed and the rain outside came down.

“Say,” whispered Gale, “but haven’t I set them swarming! Oh, Lord—what’s a bull without a bee-hive!”

Ferratoni left us presently and went to the doorway, perhaps for a better mental current. We followed him, but all was dark beyond the lake. We presently left him there and returned to our comfort

within. The thunder gradually died and the rain slackened, though the darkness did not pass. Suddenly Ferratoni hurried back to us.

They were coming, he said. They had refused to respect the desires of the Princess, or even the sanctity of the temple. They considered that we had violated their hospitality, and they demanded our lives. They had not put anybody to death in that country for five hundred years, but they were ready to do so now, and to begin with us. They had condemned all new mechanisms, and even the invention of the Princess and her brother—the dark-dispeller—they were at this moment preparing to throw into the lake. The telephones they had destroyed, utterly.

“Don’t blame ’em much for pitching that lighting machine into the lake,” muttered Gale, “I wanted to do that, myself. But how about *us*? Are we going to let ’em pitch *us* in?”

“There are two chances,” replied Ferratoni. One is immediate flight to the court of the Prince, who will endeavor to give protection and assistance. The other is safety, here. It is pardon—the Pardon of Love.”

“The what?” asked Gale. “Oh, yes, I remember, now. The old law that—um—yes—who are they?”

“The three,” said Ferratoni, “the three whose

hands were pressed in parting. They are willing to grant life—and love. They are coming even now, with the others. You must decide—and quickly!”

It had grown very still in the temple. So still that Gale said afterwards he could hear his hair falling out. It was probably but a few seconds before he spoke, though it seemed much longer.

“Nick,” he said, “we’re up against it, hard. It’s marry or move; which will you do?”

My mind was a tumult and a confusion, but the memory of Edith Gale’s words became a path of light.

“Move!” I said, “and with no waste of time!”

“What about you, Tony? Are you in on the deal, too?”

“I know not. I am at the will and service of the Princess. She has not yet spoken.”

“And you, Bill, what do you vote for?”

“I—I—that is—I’m with the Admiral, as always.”

“And the Admiral is for getting out of here. I’ve no fault to find with the young ladies, but I’ve got business in Bottle Bay. Come!”

We hastened outside. It was still dark and a second shower had gathered, though we did not notice this fact. What we did see was that more than half-way across the strip of water that sepa-

rated us from the shore there was a crowd of torch-lit barges, and that they were coming rapidly. For once in their lives these people had forgotten, and were hurrying. In front of the others came a smaller barge, driven by the sturdiest of their rowers. In it sat the Lady of the Lilies, and the three who had pressed our hands at parting. Clearly, there was no time to lose.

We made a hasty attempt to loosen our boat, but fumbled the knot and lost time.

"Haste, or you will be too late," urged Ferratoni.

"Oh, Lord," groaned Gale, "if we just hadn't left our propeller boat down yonder!"

But at that instant the knot untied, and we tumbled in. We had no light and we did not believe they could see us, though they were now very near. Ferratoni still lingered on the step, looking at the approaching barges.

"Come on, Tony," urged Gale, "don't take any chances!"

But bending over he caught our boat, and with a push sent us down the tide.

"Go," he said, "I am not coming. I wait the will and service of the Princess!"

Yet we hesitated to leave him. A heavy projection, or coping, extended from the lower terrace out over the water, and in the blackness beneath we

drifted and waited. We could not see Ferratoni from where we lay, but we could watch the oncoming barges and were near enough to get quickly into the midst of things in case of violence. In the end it would almost certainly mean death to us all, but we felt that with the serviceable oars as weapons, we could give some previous account of ourselves.

On came the barges. The first with the Princess was presently at the steps, and almost immediately the others. We saw the Lady of the Lilies and her three companions ascend hastily to where we had left Ferratoni. From the other barges poured a horde of wild-faced creatures, curiously armed with quaint weapons of a forgotten age. We waited until with a fierce clamor they were rushing up the stairs, then with a push against the abutment to which we were clinging, we sent our boat up nearer, and out where we could see.

And now we realized that Ferratoni was no longer where we had left him, but had retired within the temple that we might have a better opportunity to escape unseen. The mob was pushing through the entrance noisily.

"We'll get round to the north door quick!" whispered Gale. "Mebbe we can see there what's going on inside, and it'll be handier to leave suddenly if we decide to."

By north, Gale meant the direction from which

we had entered the country, and by which we now hoped to get out of it. The current ran strongly in that direction, and a stroke of the oars sent us swiftly along the wall. A vivid flash of lightning as we turned the corner, followed by quick thunder, told that the second shower was upon us.

Just below the temple we were caught in a fierce swirl. For a moment it well-nigh swamped our light craft. Then with scornful violence it flung us to the landing steps on that side. We leaped out, each with an oar, and seizing the barge drew it up a little on the lower step, so that it would hold, without fastening. Then we hurried up the stair, and crept cautiously to the entrance.

From the great depths within, there came a general babel that seemed to increase as we approached. By the tone of it they had not yet found Ferratoni. I believe now that in the turbulence of an anger heretofore unknown to them, their perceptions must have been disordered, that they had become mentally blind. But suddenly, just as we slipped into the dark tunnel-like entrance, and parted the heavy curtains beyond, there came a wild uproar as of discovery, then—silence.

We had been about to rush in and do what we could to aid our companion, but Gale, who was ahead and got the first glimpse beyond the curtain,

stopped us. Then he drew the curtain still farther aside, and we all looked in.

About the center of the vast depths, the crowded torches were swaying. They made a lurid circle, beyond which the symboled and draped walls melted into shadows and blackness. But in the midst of the torches rose the great central altar, still bestrewn with the flowers of their recent ceremonial. About its base the angry ones had gathered, while above them, before the very shrine of the Sun itself, there stood two of the fairest creatures under heaven—our own beautiful Ferratoni, and at his side, her arms laid about his shoulders, the Princess of the Liliated Hills.

Chauncey Gale insists that grouped on a lower step of the altar, bowed like the children of Niobe, were those who would have granted also to us the sacred Pardon of Love. But I did not see them, nor did Mr. Sturritt, and I do not believe Gale did, either. Indeed, we had eyes only for those other two. Like the populace, spellbound and speechless, forgetting our own existence, we stood and gaped at them. Gale was first to recall himself.

“Tableau!” he said, “show’s over! Let’s ring down the curtain, now, and get out of here, quick!”

Yet we lingered for one final look. And lo, all at once, from some high oriel window, there fell upon them a long golden bar of the returning sun-



THE PARDON OF LOVE.

“There fell upon them a long golden bar of the returning sunlight.”

—Page 288.

light. And the silence about them awakened to a wondering murmur that grew to a low chant, then quickly increased in volume, bursting at last into a mighty anthem which we recognized as their marriage chorus.

"Come! Come!" insisted Gale. "That isn't for us. The orchestra is playing us out. Let's take the hint and go before they change their minds. 'Tisn't our wedding, and we don't want it to be our funeral, either."

Reluctantly we dropped the curtains then, and hastened down the steps. It was still raining wispily, but the sun was rifting through, and a wonderful rainbow arched the black sky opposite. We pushed off our boat, and bent to the oars with all our strength, sending the light barge swiftly down the tide that between the Lilied Hills, through the Purple Fields, and under the Plains of White found its way at last to the far-off Billowcrest—and home.

XXXV.

DOWN THE RIVER OF COMING DARK.

WE were not pursued, or, if we were, we saw nothing of our pursuers. When the storm had all cleared away, we saw here and there people along the shore, but they did not offer to interfere with our flight. On the contrary, they seemed rather interested, and even pleased at our rate of speed. We believed that with the wedding ceremony of the Princess and Ferratoni the better nature of the race once more got the upper hand, and that they were satisfied to know that we were getting out of the country as rapidly as our skill and muscular development would permit.

Some mental communication to this effect must have passed between the court of the Lily Princess and that of her brother, the Prince of the Purple Fields, for when some twenty hours later (we had wound our watches now) we reached his palace, we found the Prince and his court assembled at the outer entrance, and our own beautiful propeller boat

waiting in readiness for the immediate continuance of our journey.

Noticing the assembly as we came on we had some doubts as to their intentions, but we did not hesitate, and we found the Prince and those about him gentle and kindly as before. Their willingness that we should continue our journey, however, was quite apparent, and as our boat contained all our belongings and had been fully provisioned by the Prince's household, there was no excuse for delay.

Indeed, we were as eager to get out of their halcyon vale as they were to have us, and we did not remain longer in it than it took for us to climb from one boat into the other and touch the button that started the propeller. The battery had not failed, and aided by the tide we were off with a speed that seemed to us like that of a torpedo boat. We turned then and waved our hands and called good-byes to the gentle Prince and those of his pleasant palace.

And so adieu to the land of my fancy—my isle of lost argosies and forgotten songs. One among us had found there the ideal he sought—life's perfect chord. For the others—the lives we had lived and the lives of those who had lived before us, had not fitted us for that Port of Dreams.

We would return to our own. When or by what means we did not know—the way ahead seemed long and weary—but come what might, we

had resolved to reach once more those who waited beyond the cold desolation between, and with them to go back to the only life we knew, in a world of growth and change.

XXXVI.

THE "PASSAGE OF THE DEAD."

WE made time, now. We were not creeping upstream, delayed by slow-moving barges. We were going with the tide and all handicaps had been removed. In less than thirty hours, including all stops, we had covered the distance that it had taken us days to ascend, and camped once more in the violet fields above the rapids. I had taken an observation at this point, and by taking another now I was able from the position of the sun and a reference to my charts to establish the date and, approximately, the hour. My calculation showed that it was November the Ninth. Seven weeks had elapsed since our departure from the Billowcrest. It seemed as many ages.

The purple flowers that had welcomed us to the enchanted land were withered, but their leaves remained, and in every direction showed as a level carpet of green. Reaching the rapids we once more removed our boat from the water. The snow on the hillside was gone, but we trundled our craft down over the bare rock and shale without serious

difficulty, and launched it again in the swift current below. Neither was there any snow on the barren lands ahead as far as we could see, and it was not until some hours later that it began to show along the banks.

The ice, too, seemed entirely gone from the river, but as the snow deepened along the shores we knew we must ere long reach the point where the current plunged beneath the eternal barrier into that dark-some passage by which so many of the Antarctic dead had found their way to the Land of the Silent Cold.

The walls of ice and snow on either side of us deepened rapidly. Soon we were sweeping through a chill canyon down whose glittering sides dashed crystal streams from the melting snow above. Here and there appeared places by which it seemed possible to ascend to the snow level, but no one as yet spoke of halting. It would mean the deserting of our boat, which three of us could hardly attempt to push up the homeward incline, and the bundling upon our backs of such supplies and comforts as we could carry, to toil with them across the drifted wastes that lay between us and the Billowcrest. And at the end of that journey—if we ever reached the end—lay the huge perpendicular wall down which we must still find our way. In fact, neither our prospect nor our surroundings were conducive

to conversation, and with the increasing cold, and the black, semi-transparent walls becoming rapidly loftier, we said not many words, and these in low voices, as if we were indeed among the dead.

"Do you suppose any of their funeral boats ever get down those rapids without being upset?" whispered Gale, at last.

"It is possible," I said, "it is only a question of avoiding the rocks. No doubt many of them do. They are of course sunken in the tunnel afterwards. The tide must fill it for a good way up, you know."

"Nick," said Gale suddenly, "what would you think of *us* trying to go through that tunnel?"

I gave a great spasmodic shudder.

"Don't! I have already thought of it," I managed to say. "It makes me ill!"

"But I mean it, Nick," persisted Gale. "There can't be more than a hundred and fifty miles of it. and it's not so much colder inside than it is here. We've got our electric lamp ahead, and we could make it in seven or eight hours, the way we are going. If we can hit the tide right we might do it as easy as nothing. If we did, we'd be home for dinner. If we didn't—well, Nick, to talk right out in meeting, I don't believe we'd have a bit more chance of getting home the other way, and a good deal longer misery before—before we quit trying. Ain't that so, now? What do you think, Bill?"

Neither of us could reply immediately. The thought had lurked in the minds of all, but when put into words it was a bit staggering. Yet the prospect of being, within a few hours, on the Billow-crest with Edith—for dinner, as her father put it—started the warm blood once more in my veins. Perhaps the latter appealed to Mr. Sturritt also.

“I—I—that is—I’m with—er—the Admiral,” he managed to say at last, “as usual.”

“And so am I,” I agreed. “We can only die once wherever we are, and it is better to take the chances where we will go all together, in a minute, and be carried somewhere near our friends, than to perish lingeringly one after another, away off up yonder in the snow.”

“That’s my ticket!” assented Gale. “And anyway, our boat, some of it, will get through, with all these air-tight compartments, and we can put some messages in each one, so if any pieces are picked up the folks will know what became of us.”

We began doing this at once, for we felt that the entrance to the dark tunnel could not be far distant. The walls on either side were becoming very high, and in places drew inward alarmingly. The river was narrowing too, and was much swifter.

“We couldn’t get up, now, if we wanted to,” commented Gale, presently, “and say, Nick, there’s a bend just ahead.”

But it was not a bend. The walls bent, truly, but they bent inward, and far above they joined. Below was a depth of blackness into which our eyes could pierce but a little way.

It was the "Passage of the Dead!"

We hastily slackened our speed to consider a little. Gale was making a calculation.

"It's now ten o'clock," he said, at last, "and as nearly as I can figure, the tide ought to be about half down in Bottle Bay. It'll be low tide at—say one o'clock, and high tide again about seven, unless the wind's blowing in there. That would bring the tide up earlier. What we want to do, Nick, is not to waste a minute, so's to get there if we can before the tide closes the entrance again."

"Why run that risk?" I shivered. "Why not figure to get there at low tide?"

"Because," explained Gale, "that tide don't stop at the opening. It comes on up—perhaps a good ways. When it's low tide there, there's a high tide somewhere this side, and coming this way. I don't know how fast, or how far it would come, or how far up it would close this passage. But somewhere we've probably got to meet that tide, and the farther up this way it is, the less likely it'll be to rise higher than the ceiling."

I had another spasmodic seizure at this suggestion. It amounted to almost a chill, in fact, and

Gale considerably waited until I was better. Then he said:

"If we pass that tide all right, we'll have a clear run for the entrance, and if I've counted the time right we ought to make it before it closes. Of course if there's a head wind, or our propeller gives out—why——"

"I know," I said hastily, though with some attempt at calmness, "we wouldn't get through."

"Oh, yes we would," said Gale cheerfully, "we'd get through all right, but we wouldn't be worth picking up, afterwards."

We were now at the entrance of the great tunnel. The ceiling above was a vast black arch, hollowed out by the warmer waters of the river, during its great freshets. At the opening it was very high, and the span above thin and crumbling, and hung with huge icicles. Streams of water were pouring from it, and we had barely passed beneath when just behind there came the crash of falling fragments.

We were nearly upset by the upheaval of water, but were presently beyond the reach of this danger. We had turned on our light, and it threw a long white radiance ahead that dazzled back and forth, and up and down, between ice and water in a wonderful iridescence. The wide ceiling lowered rapidly until it was perhaps fifteen feet above our heads and

seemed much closer. We remembered that at Bottle Bay it was less than ten, and the tides there rose very high.

We were running at full speed and the current was swift. Our log showed that we were making twenty miles an hour. At this rate we believed that a little more than seven hours would bring us through. Perhaps even less than that. In spite of the vault-like cold and stillness about us, we grew mildly cheerful.

"Nick," said Gale, "we're going home in style. What do you suppose Johnnie and Biff will say, if they happen to see us pop out into Bottle Bay, as if we'd been shot out of a gun?"

The prospect seemed almost too joyful to consider.

Gale, meantime, had opened one of the compartments, and brought forth a small flask containing what was left of our supply of brandy. He held it up to the light.

"Just about one apiece," he commented cheerfully. "If we get through all right, we'll have plenty more. If we don't we won't need it. What is hope without a high-ball? Age before beauty, Bill, you first."

Mr. Sturritt shook his head. I think he seldom tasted liquors.

"I—er—I have a few of the brown lozenges,"

he explained. "They are very stim—that is—sustaining during cold, as you remember."

"What's that ahead, Nick?" Gale asked suddenly.

There was an outline in the light over our bow that stopped all tendency to mirth. It was that of a canoe, and presently when we swept by it, we got a glimpse of a white, dead face within.

Silently Gale once more extended toward Mr. Sturritt the depleted flask. This time he did not refuse.

XXXVII.

THE RISING TIDE.

IT was about three o'clock in the afternoon when we noticed that the ceiling seemed to be drawing nearer to our heads. The change was very gradual and at first we could not be sure. Then Gale said :

“ It's getting closer, boys—there's no doubt of it. We're probably down to tide-water, and I believe we're hitting it just about right—it can't fill up along here.”

We steered the boat toward the side of the passage and examined the ice closely as we passed. Then he indicated a faint line about three feet above us.

“ There's where it gets to, here,” he said; “ of course it gets higher farther down. If it gets too high, well——”

He did not finish, and we went on at full speed.

Lower and lower descended the wall above. At half-past four it was within two feet of our heads, when we sat upright, and stretching away into the blackness on either side it seemed an irresistible

mountain mass that was to crush us beneath the flood. We felt that we were going slower, too, for the tide had opposed and checked the current.

At quarter of five I was obliged to stoop.

"Low bridge," said Gale, but less than an hour later the situation lost its last vestige of humor, even for him.

From the bottom of the boat where we were lying, he called :

"Nick, I forgot one thing. The ebb tide and the incoming tide probably meet about here. I think we're goners."

I lay in the bow, which still lacked a few inches of touching the ice above. I had my eyes lifted as high as possible, looking ahead. The world weight of ice was coming down—down—the world of water rising, and steadily rising from below. Between, the space was narrowing from feet to inches, and the line of meeting seemed just ahead. Once I thought I saw there a tiny spark that was not of our own light. Then it disappeared, came again, disappeared—I could not look. I felt already that I was being crushed, smothered, drowned.

The ice above brushed against my hair. I lowered my head quickly until like the others I lay full length in the bottom of the boat.

"Gale—Sturritt," I groaned, "forgive me! I got you into all this."

Chauncey Gale's smothered voice was first to answer.

"Not a word, Nick! We went into the game with our eyes open. Besides, this deal is mine."

And from Mr. Sturritt:

"It's—it's all right. I—I'm with the Admiral!"

And now the bow was touching and sliding on the ice above. It was several inches higher than the stern, but presently that touched also. We were being pressed slowly, surely downward. I don't know what the others were doing, but I was praying, hard.

Lower, and still lower. Water splashed cold against my face, and choked the good-by I was about to utter. Then came another splash, and another—then a great cold stream, and then——

A sharp grating above—a roaring of waters all about—a lifting—a tossing—and a burst of something that brought me suddenly upright to God's daylight, and the fresh salt air of Bottle Bay!

Behind us, the rising tide was roaring into the opening of the tunnel, that was now open and now closed by the billows. Our boat was more than half filled with water and we were choking and gasping, but above us was blue sky, and before us, not two hundred yards away, our stanch, our noble, our beautiful Billowcrest. Somebody was on deck. Somebody with a peaked fur hood—somebody who

gave a great shout that brought others from everywhere. And a moment later we were on board—welcomed by those who loved us!

“Biff,” said Gale, as he greeted him, “have you got up steam?”

“A little, and I can get up a good deal more in five minutes.”

“Well, get her up, and let’s pull out of here, quick!”

Then turning to me:

“Come, Nick, break away there, and let’s get these wet clothes off while Johnnie’s looking after something extra for dinner. I told you we’d get here in time.”

XXXVIII.

STORM AND STRESS.

UPON our voyage to the north I shall not dwell. I have neither the time nor the willingness to do so. The memory of those days is weird and depressing. I would cover with all speed the place they occupy in this history.

From Bottle Bay we followed the great salt current eastward, as we did not believe it possible to work northward against it. For two days all went well, and we found happiness in our reunion and homeward progress. Then all the joyless misery of Antarctic lands and seas seemed to gather and shut us in.

For five weeks through this blinding fog, crashing ice, and imminent, sleep-destroying peril we crept, and toiled, and struggled, and battled our way toward open water. For days we did not remove our clothing to rest, but lay down ready for instant action, whether to save or desert the ship.

Depression seized upon us all. Edith Gale was ill much of the time and lost her appreciation of the beauties of nature. Even Gale himself found it

hard to create cheer through this grim period. During moments of comparative calm he wandered about with his hands in his pockets, trying to whistle, but it was a dismal tune.

As for myself, I despaired utterly. More than ever I realized what I had done in bringing those who had trusted me into so dire a plight. And for what? To prove a theory that was worth nothing to them or to me, after all was told. To seek out a practically inaccessible land, and what now seemed to me a paltry, indolent race that added nothing to the world's store of wealth or progress—to pay for it with our lives. I had promised a new world, perhaps wealth beyond our wildest dreams. I had found, instead, a land of dreams only, and of shadows. I had brought us all, at last, face to face with privation, suffering—death. Even should we eventually reach home, it seemed to me that I, still a penniless adventurer, could not presume to claim the hand of Edith Gale. Truly I was in the depths.

Whether we kept with the current, or what part it played in our struggles, we could not tell, but we reached at last the easier seas below Cape Horn, and here we were met by what seemed to us the King of All Storms, determined at last to destroy us for having penetrated the depths of his domain.

We were off the South Shetlands again, somewhere near the spot where, twenty years before, my

uncle's vessel had been last seen battling with a mighty tempest, and was supposed to have gone down. I reflected vaguely that it must have been another just such as this, and that it was a curious fate that had brought me with those I loved to find a grave in the same unfriendly waters.

There were nights, now, and the black sea and sky made this one a memory that divides as with a sable curtain all that went before it from all that followed after.

Once there came a heavy jar as our keel struck and grated over some hidden reef. We had no means of knowing where we were, and even had we known, the knowledge would have availed us little in these uncharted seas.

Suddenly, in the electric glow of our searchlight, there rose straight before us a black wall that was not the penetrable night. A great wave just then lifted us and bore us forward. An instant later there came a jar that threw us from our feet, and then the stanch old Billowcrest no longer tossed and pitched and battled, but lay rocking helplessly, as though wounded to the life.

There came first a quick order to lower the boats. Then another to hold them in readiness, but not to launch until the vessel gave signs of breaking up. It was better to remain where we were, as long as we could—to wait for daylight, if possible. Ex-

amined below, the Billowcrest showed as yet no opening, and seemed to be lying easily.

Morning dawned at last on a gray, desolate shore, with a sea as gray and desolate, between. But the King of Storms, satisfied, perhaps, that he had stranded us on a desert island, had gone his way.

Chauncey Gale came on deck presently with Edith, still pale and ill, but more animated than she had been for days. With Captain Biffer I had come out early to view the shore.

"Well, Biff," greeted Gale, "you seem to have got us anchored some place at last. Don't look much like the last place we stopped, but I s'pose it's all in a day's work. What do you call it?"

"One of the South Shetlands, I should say. I don't know which."

"How's the ship? Any holes in her yet?"

"No, and she ain't grinding any that I can hear. But she's aground good and hard. She seems to be on a flat surface—mebbe sand. The sea's running down, too, and I shouldn't wonder if we were left high and dry before long."

"Oh, can't we go ashore?" asked Edith Gale, eagerly.

Poor girl, it was the first real land she had seen for more than a year, and even this cheerless coast seemed inviting.

Captain Biffer nodded grimly.

"We'll have plenty of time to do that, ma'am," he said, "before we get out of here, I'm thinking."

"Oh, Nicholas, will you take me right away? I do so want to set foot on solid ground again."

"We will go as soon as the Captain will let us," I said, "and give us somebody to take us over."

The sea continued to run down, and during the forenoon the Billowcrest listed, though far less than if she had been a deeper vessel. The weather cleared just before luncheon, and soon afterwards Chauncey and Edith Gale, with Officer Larkins and myself, and a small crew, made ready to set out in the launch for investigation. At the last moment, we heard somebody come puffing up the companion-way, and Zar, fully arrayed for the trip, stood before us.

"Look heah, I wan' you take me in dat boat! I jes' wan' to set dis old foot on solidificated groun' once more befo' I die. I mighty tiahd dis ole ship dat toss, an' tip, an' spread-eagle, and double-shuffle, an' keep hit up foh six weeks at a stretch, an' now tip ovah like a side-hill, so a' old, fat 'ooman like me cain't fin' her balance, nohow. I wan' go long, I tell you."

So Zar accompanied us, and we landed presently at a shelving beach, where we were greeted by some noisy birds, and a few small hair-seals, who slipped into the water as we approached. Leaving the crew

we made our way between barren hills to the country beyond.

The sun had come out, now, and being midsummer it seemed warm and genial, especially to those who had seen no other land for so long.

"Not much like our violet reception in the Antarctics, eh, Nick?" said Gale.

"Oh, but it's land! land!" breathed Edith "Warm, solid land! Aren't we glad to see it, Zar?" and it seemed to me that she grew well as I watched her.

"Yes, *ma'am!* We is *dat!* Hit's a mighty po' country, I spec', but hit seem to me right now as fine an' proliferous as ole Vaginny!"

Even Mr. Larkins seemed to joy in the land feeling, and said that it reminded him of places in Newfoundland, where as a boy he had found the bake-apple. He believed we could find it here, if we looked about a little.

We pushed our way inland, and farther down the coast. There was a sparse moss vegetation here and there, and on one sunny bank we found a considerable bed of this growth. Edith Gale dropped down upon it luxuriously, and the rest of us followed her example.

"Oh, how beautiful!" she cried, "and how I loathe the ship! It seems to me that I could stay here forever!"

Zar grunted approvingly, but Gale said:

"I'd be glad enough to hurry back to the old Billowcrest if she was only afloat. We'll get tired enough of this, I'm thinking, before that happens."

I made no comment on this, but called attention to a ledge of rocks just beyond.

"Looks as if somebody had been hammering on it," I said. "I suppose nobody lives on these islands."

"Not a soul crreature," declared Mr. Larkins. "Forthy year ago they used to come here for the furr-seals, but they got the last of 'em in a shmall bit of a time. No pay in comin' for the little hair fellies. 'Tis said they's gold here, too, but I've never met the man that saw the color of it."

We rose and walked on. We had grown a bit chilly, sitting, and would presently return to the vessel. All at once, Edith Gale stopped and held up her hand.

"Wait—listen!" she commanded.

Borne to us on a light breeze from the south, came the sound of a voice singing.

We looked at each other startled. There was something about it, most uncanny.

"My good lawd!" groaned Zar. "Dat's a sho sperritt! Lemme get outen heah an' back to dat boat."

Mr. Larkins detained her,

"Wait," he said. "There's a bit of an echo hereabout. The singin' 'll be comin' from the ship, I think."

There was a wave of relief. Then Gale dissented.

"That's not from the ship. The wind isn't right. It's from the land——"

We hurried to the top of a little rise, just ahead; here we halted and listened again. We could hear much more plainly now. Even the words came quite distinctly.

"I'm out of humanity's reach—
I must finish my journey alone.
Afar from the music of speech—
I start at the sound of my own."

"Selkirk's hymn," I whispered. "I know it perfectly. My grandmother sang it to her children, and my mother to me."

"I am monarch of all I survey—
My right there is none to dispute—
From the center all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute."

"Yes! yes! and that, too!" I added, excitedly. "Some one is cast away in this place. Come, we must find him!"

"Oh, and quickly!" urged Edith; but the singing had begun again and we hesitated, to listen.

“ There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found.
They softly lie and sweetly sleep,
Low in the ground.”

“ The storm that wrecks the winter's sky
No more disturbs their sweet repose
Than summer evening's latest sigh
That shuts the rose.

“ I know that, too,” said Edith. “ It is by James Montgomery. It is also a hymn.”

“ And another of those I heard in childhood,” I answered eagerly. “ The favorite of—of one who perished—Come on! everybody, I must see what this means!”

The singing had ceased now, but we hastily scrambled over the rocks in the direction from which it had come. Pushing out from behind a great boulder we looked down a little slope upon what at first seemed to be a heap of boulders. Then we saw that it was the construction of human hands—a habitation. We descended quickly, though almost in silence, only whispering caution to each other. A rolling stone, however, slipped from beneath my foot and went plunging to the side of the hut. A moment later there stepped out into view a curious fur-clad figure—tall, bearded, and with masses of grizzled hair upon his shoulders. An aged man he seemed, but bronzed, erect, and with the movement of strength.

A moment he looked at us as if doubting his vision. Then, flinging both arms in the air, he gave a great cry of welcome.

We rushed down and surrounded him. He seized our hands wildly.

"Who are you?" he cried. "Who are you? And why are you here?"

But I besought him with fierce eagerness.

"Tell us, first, who *you* are!" I commanded, "and why *you* are here!"

"Oh, it does not matter," he answered, "I have been dead twenty years! But when I was in the world of men I was called Nicholas Lovejoy."

"Then," I shouted, "you are my uncle—for I am Nicholas Chase!"

XXXIX.

WHERE DREAMS BECOME REAL.

IN the little hut which he had built, and where all the years he had lived alone, he told us his story. It was hardly more than a word. When the vessel went down, he had drifted with one other, on a spar, to this island. The other had died next day from exposure, and was buried not far away. And winter and summer for twenty-one years the survivor had waited for those who never came.

At first he had hoisted the spar with a signal, but long since he had lost hope, and when at last a wind blew it down he had not replaced it. His speech he had preserved by singing and reciting such things as he knew, and so comforted himself. Less than seventy years old, he was still a man of strength and vigor.

In return I informed him of our plight and briefly outlined our previous expedition. When I had finished my Uncle Nicholas regarded me for a moment in silence. Then, smiling:

“ So, Nick, you found the warm South Pole. My boy, I have believed in it for fifty years.”

"I always thought of you in that way," I said. "I knew you would have helped me. I even thought you might have gone there."

"And so I might if my ship had come into port," he sighed. Then, to Gale, "As for *your* ship, I think she is safe enough. She is probably on the sand only. It makes in and out of that place as the winds change. You may have twenty feet of water there in a week."

He set out with us for the vessel. At first sight of the Billowcrest, he paused and regarded her rapturously.

"Oh, that beautiful ship," he cried. "How I have longed for this moment."

It was with him as with Edith when she had welcomed his desert island. The Billowcrest was not really beautiful after her long battle with the elements, and perhaps later he might not altogether approve of her model, but now she seemed as a winged messenger from Paradise.

When we reached the launch the sailors regarded our companion with wonder, and as we drew near the Billowcrest a curious group gathered on the deck forward.

Foremost of these was Captain Biffer. I had never spoken to him of my sailor uncle. My former experiences in that line may have resulted in this delicacy, or it may have been out of considera-

tion for my relative, whose skill as a navigator might have been judged by that of his nephew. Now, however, I ascended proudly to the deck.

"Captain Biffer," I said, "I want to present to you my uncle, Captain Nicholas Lovejoy."

With his deflected orb Captain Biffer pierced my innermost being, while with his good eye he searched deeply the soul of the man before him. He tried to speak, but at first his voice failed him. Then he said huskily :

"Captain Nick Lovejoy, don't you know your old shipmate, Joe Biffer?"

My uncle, too, started and gasped.

"My God, yes!" he said, "it's Joe—Joe Biffer of Boston!"

A moment later Captain Biffer turned and seized my hand.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he demanded; "and say, Chase, I've learned to like a good many things about you since we've been together, but this is the best yet."

At which Zar, who was standing by, added :

"An' to think dat ole Aunt Artics o' his turned out to be a' uncle, aftah all!"

That night in my stateroom my Uncle Nicholas and I talked until near morning. I told him of events that had come and gone, and of family changes. Then more fully of our expedition, my

love for Edith Gale, and how, as matters had turned out, I did not feel justified in claiming the promise she had made me.

He listened quietly and when I had finished, he said:

"It's the money difference you feel most, isn't it?"

I nodded.

"I have only a few thousand dollars," I said, "a mere drop with a man like Gale."

He took my hand.

"Never mind, my boy. Money isn't everything. You are about to give to the world a knowledge it has long hungered for, and true love is of more value than either. Besides you are—or would have been—my heir, if my ship had come into port. As it is, perhaps I can help a little. I have had a good deal of time to prospect, over yonder, during the past twenty years, and I have found indications that may develop something in the way of mining. We'll go over to-morrow, and take a look. Good night, now—I mean good morning—you must try and rest some."

I retired, but sleep seemed far from me. The events of the day had been too momentous. And then my uncle's words had left in me a spark of comfort—of hope. Yet, from somewhere out of the spaces sleep did come, and the sun was pour-

ing into the uptilted port-hole of my stateroom when I awoke.

We were off for the island again, immediately after breakfast. My uncle, trimmed, and arrayed in one of Captain Biffer's uniforms, made now a most imposing figure, and this time Captain Biffer himself, with Chauncey and Edith Gale, completed the party.

As we passed the point of rock where I had noticed what had seemed to me signs of hammering, my uncle paused.

"Here is one place where I prospected," he said. He pointed to a thread-like vein of yellow. "I believe that is gold. But I have never had tools to follow a ledge vein, and have done rather more at looking for placers, such as I saw in California, in the fifties."

My hopes withered. The tiny yellow streak seemed to me so small and uncertain. As for "placers," I only knew dimly that they were connected in some way with "pockets," and "washing."

We pushed on to his hut of stones. A very comfortable hut we had found it to be, and more roomy than it had appeared from without. My uncle entered first, and presently called to us. Within, he indicated seats on the stone benches ranged around the walls. He first exhibited a few curiosities he

had gathered during his long exile, then also seating himself, he said :

“ My nephew Nicholas confided to me last night a matter I take to be well understood by all present. It concerns chiefly himself and a certain young lady, who is not far away.” He looked toward Edith Gale, who blushed and smiled, but said nothing. “ Nicholas told me further,” my uncle continued, “ of his lack of fortune, and his unwillingness to hold her to a promise made with different prospects ahead.”

At this point Chauncey Gale started to speak, but my Uncle Nicholas checked him. I did not look at Edith, but she told me afterwards how she felt, and I sympathized with her. My uncle proceeded.

“ I told my nephew that money was not all of life. That he would give to the world a treasure of information, and that love was still greater than either knowledge or riches.”

I began to grow uncomfortable. Also, less glad than I had been that we had discovered my uncle. True, he had not talked to anybody for so long that he was doubtless anxious to make up for lost time, but I wished he had selected some other subject. We waited the end in silence.

“ He would have been my heir,” he went on, “ had my ship come into port. He is my heir to-day of whatever of property or prospect I may leave

behind. Of prospect I believe there is considerable on this island. Of property—well, as I told Nick, I have had a good deal of time on my hands during the past twenty-one years, and the result”—turning, he laid his hand on a great flat stone in the wall near him, and swung it aside—“it is in there—you can see it for yourselves.”

We leaned forward and looked into the opening made. Beyond, there was a sort of storehouse or small room, the floor smoothly covered with skins. In the center arose a heap or pyramid of what appeared to be irregular yellow lumps of earth, or pebbles, of varying sizes—some very small—others quite large. No one spoke, but we looked at him questioningly.

“Those are nuggets,” he said. “That pile contains, I believe, about two tons of solid gold!”

XL.

CLAIMING THE REWARD.

FOR three weeks the Billowcrest lay a prisoner off the South Shetlands—just which of these islands, I do not consider it proper at this time to say. Assisted by Chauncey and Edith Gale, my uncle and I put the treasure into bags and had it conveyed to the vessel as “mineral specimens,” for we felt that we could not wholly trust our crew. Then at length a wind from the northwest set the currents a new pace and altered the sand drift. We found ourselves afloat one morning, and crowding on sail and steam made all speed northward, arriving safely in New York harbor on the evening of February second, after an absence of nearly eighteen months.

As we came in through the dusk, the splendid cities and the bridge between to us seemed gloriously illuminated; but if so, it was not in our honor. Nobody knew that we had returned, or even that we had gone.

We steamed up North River to our old dock, and Chauncey Gale set forth at once to catch a Broad-

way car for a certain down-town theater, which he greatly feared had been discontinued during our absence. Next morning I went with my uncle to establish some desirable banking connections, through which his treasure might be properly transferred, and converted into funds.

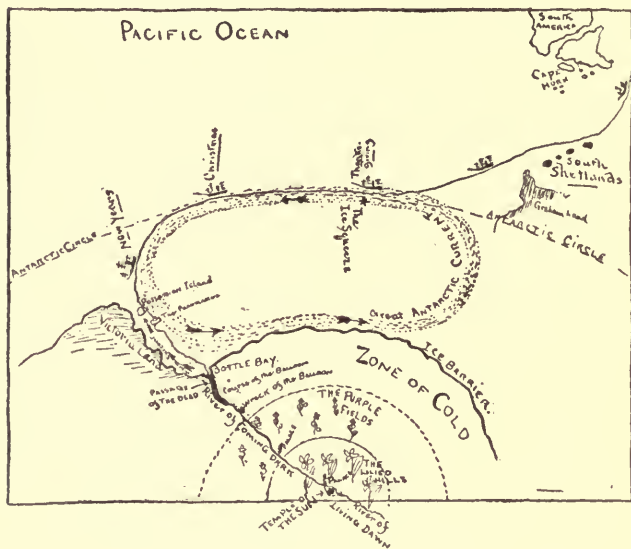
As to when and in what manner we should make our adventures, and the results of the expedition, public property, we were at first undecided. Newspaper notoriety was not a pleasant prospect, particularly as we were already contemplating a second voyage to the South. We therefore concluded to say nothing immediately, and meanwhile to have the old Billowcrest thoroughly overhauled and outfitted for the voyage to be undertaken in the late summer—not to the South Pole this time, but to the South Shetlands, to develop in the spot of his exile the mines which my uncle believes to be almost inexhaustible.

And so—to use the so-called Irish form—we have “continued to say nothing” through the spring and summer, during which period I have prepared the matter already in the proper hands for publication.

We are about to sail again now, and by the time my report is given to the reader I shall be beyond the reach of either approval or condemnation—far on my way to our new “Treasure Island” of the South, where the rarest treasure will be one who

joins in this, our unique honeymoon—she who was Edith Gale.

For I claimed my reward this morning—two years from the day when she jestingly agreed that I should name my price for a new world—and in the little forward cabin of the *Billowcrest* where the agreement was made.



"It was hardly fair," she whispered, just before the ceremony. "I am paying to the full, while you, though you found the world, could not deliver it into my hands."

"It is the old story," I said. "The man always gets more than he bargained for, and the woman less."

And Chauncey Gale, when he took our hands in congratulation, repeated the first comment that was made when my uncle showed us his store of gold.

"Well, Nick," he said, "as I remarked once before, I'm something of a speculator, myself, but I give you credit for making the smallest investments and raking off the biggest returns on record."

He accompanies us on our expedition. He hesitated somewhat at first, but a few months of New York and a warm northern summer have brought back the memory and nameless fascination of the glacial atmosphere and trackless seas of the far south.

"Besides," he said, "I'm not going to become a vagrant in my old age. Think of me being homeless in the streets of New York, with no place to hang up in, except the police station of the Waldoria. Oh, Lord, what's a hat without a hall-tree!"

Mr. Sturritt, too, remains "with the Admiral, as usual." He has prepared lozenges in new and improved combinations, and especially adapted to the exertions of a miner's life. Even Zar is not going to desert us. Our former voyage, with Mr. Sturritt in charge of the commissary, was not without its attractions for her, and she now declares that "if

we jus' give up huntin' foh poles, an' stick to lookin' up our los' relation, she has no rejections to he'pin' us all she can. Besides," she says, "my Miss Edith ain' gwine off down dere widout her ole mammy to sing 'Brown Cows' when that po' li'l' gal cain't sleep."

My Uncle Nicholas, who has spent much of the summer with relatives, will naturally be in charge of the expedition, though Captain Biffer will continue in command of the *Billowcrest*, with Officers Larkins and Emory as heretofore.

"Thim's the bake-apple," said the former, when I first showed him a handful of the nuggets. "The little yellow berries that grow one on a shtalk—I felt in me bones that they grew there. I'll be helpin' ye hunt fer thim."

And so it is, that of those who sailed with us before, only Ferratoni is missing. He has become to us as a sweet memory, but far to the south, where lies my long-ago fancy, he has found that of which he also, dreamed. The long, polar night now lingers there, but I recall that enchanted land only as bathed in the light of an eternal afternoon, wherein, after our weary struggle, we found for a time the anodyne of forgetfulness and rest. Perhaps ere this he has learned a way to lighten the burden of their long dark, and however this may be, we are happy in knowing that he, too, walks in the light of

love, and that his gentle soul is chorded at last with the perfect ideal.

But I am writing—writing. Already both Chauncey Gale and my Uncle Nicholas have looked in to say that Captain Biffer is ready to cast off, while Edith, who sits by to read as I finish these last lines, whispers that the messenger boy is eagerly afraid we are going to carry him away with us.

There came to me last night, once more, the old childhood dream of blue water and white sails.

And the tide still calls, and the wind is fair, and I am going back to the sea.

THE END.

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